

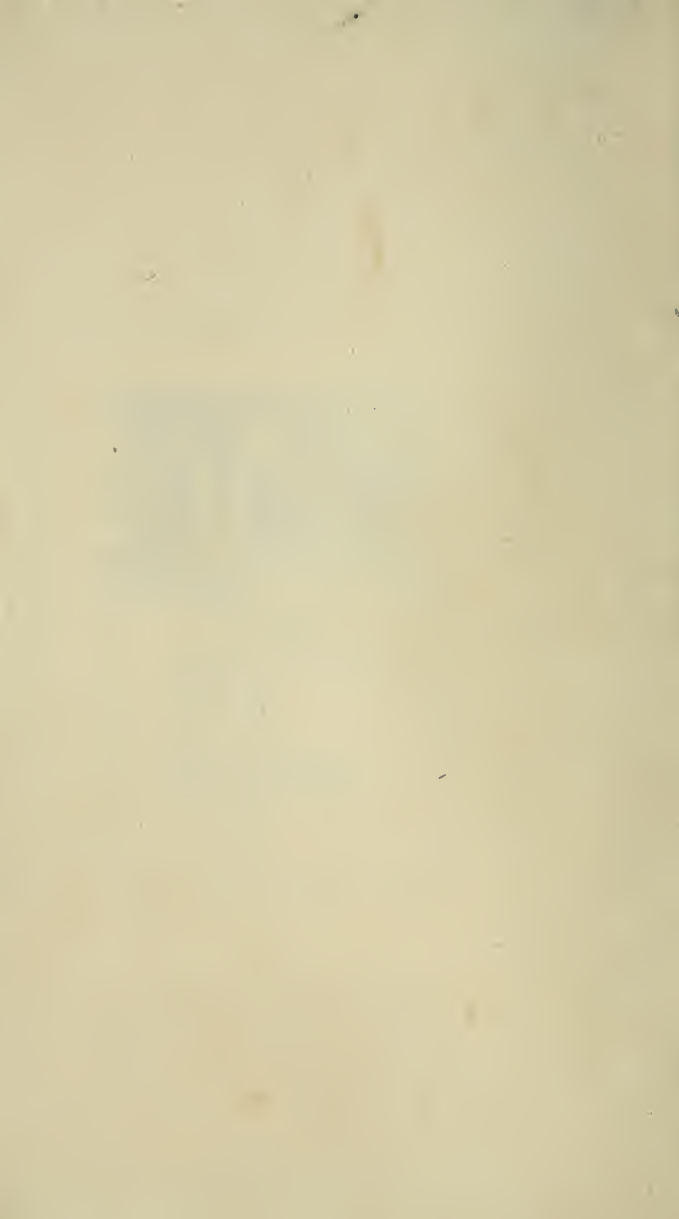
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MR. BLOUNT'S MSS.

VOL. II.

LONDON

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# MR. BLOUNT'S MSS.

BEING

SELECTIONS FROM THE PAPERS

OF

A MAN OF THE WORLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF GILBERT EARLE.

---

I waive the quantum o' the sin,  
The hazard of concealing—  
But, och! it hardens a' wi'hin,  
And petrifies the feeling!

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR CHARLES KNIGHT,  
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MR. BLOUNT'S MSS.

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EXTRACT IX.

An early love-shaft grazed his heart,  
And still the scar will ache and smart.

ROKEBY.

Ravenna, December, 1791.

You ask me whether crossing the Alps did not bring Antonia into my memory? In good sooth, Frewin, (for you know I never disguise any thing from you,) it did; and that more vividly and poignantly than I had expected. My heart must have been more truly touched in that matter than I chose to confess, even to myself; for the lapse of four years, and the intervention of divers other

*amourettes* during that time, have not, I find, served wholly to efface the scar of the wound which my heart received at Tours. I certainly loved her more deeply than I would acknowledge to myself, at the time; and I am the more sure of it, from the frequency with which I have made the acknowledgement since. Once or twice, do you know? I have felt a sort of a something approaching to regret that I did not—hang it, I can scarcely write the words—but I believe I mean that I sometimes have almost regretted that I did not *marry her*! You will stare at this; indeed I stare at it, now that I find it put into plain tangible words before me; but something very like the sensation has passed across my heart, in a less defined shape, more than once. And, to my credit be it spoken, I never once have regretted—on the contrary, I have always re-

joiced—that our intercourse did not terminate in another way, which, I will confess, of the two, occurred to me the more frequently, at the time. You see there are some hopes of me yet;—or rather I am not so bad as I have sometimes been painted.

But four years are passed since then—and, with some persons, four years carry a good deal upon their wings. The difference between twenty-three and twenty-seven is not very great, as far as mere age goes—but, faith, my heart feels, if my body does not, that it has known its best days already. I experience, occasionally, certain qualms of “vanity and vexation of spirit,” which seem to me wofully akin to the Archbishop of Granada’s homily—they smack of the decline of youthful warmth and force of feeling. Again, I sometimes feel a twinge for certain of my exploits of a few years’ back, which

used to sit most lightly on my memory:— but my conscience, now and then, suffers from indigestion,—though my stomach, I thank Heaven! is yet free. All this seems to me to say, “Sir, you are getting old, in heart, if not in constitution—if not in outward semblance, at least in inward feeling.” And what can I answer to so very disagreeable and discourteous a speech?— Why nothing; except that I am afraid it is only too true. I am the more confirmed in this belief from the feelings, with regard to Antonia, which I have actually frightened myself with, by putting into such express and definite terms as I have just now done, for the first time. When a man begins to regret that he did not marry one of his early loves, it is a sure sign that his heart is no longer so young as it was. When it looks back instead of looking forward, he may



be assured that 'the yellow leaf' is approaching.

Ah ! Charles, I may talk lightly of the matter as much as I chuse,—but I have not felt the less acutely, on this subject, for all that. When I first came into Italy, and saw that beautiful country of her's, of which she had so often spoken to me in such rapture, as we used to sit together by the side of the Loire,—I confess my heart swelled with the remembrance of all that had passed between us ; and (you will scarcely believe me) I burst into a flood of tears. This is not like me, you know :—I am not *larmoyant*—and, therefore, I have the more belief in my téars, when I do shed them. These told me, that, amidst all that had passed since we parted, Antonia's image had remained in one of the inmost folds of my heart, and, though occasionally overlooked

and forgotten, it still held its place undisturbed; and, when the fantasy of the moment had passed away, that it appeared again, in full and fond memory. In truth, she was an enchanting creature!—*Belle-et-bonne*, I used to call her, and assuredly none ever deserved the appellation better;—so amiable, so gentle, and yet with such firmness of mind and energy of understanding—and then such fondness, such fervour of feeling! Oh! it was a crying sin to sport with a heart so affectionate and noble as her's!—And to think that such a mind and such feelings should be cramped and chilled in the gloomy routine of a convent! Often and often, in the midst of scenes of gaiety, a pang has shot across my heart to think that *I* had been the cause of burying her there. Such buoyant animation, such intensity of life in all her spirits and her feelings,—a

convent must indeed have been to her as chilling, and almost as repulsive, as the grave itself. In the only letter I ever received from her, however much she strove, from consideration for my feelings, to conceal it,—it was evident that, with her youth and youthful feelings, she shrank from this living death. But the only alternative which was open to her, she shrank from still more—marriage with an indifferent and distasteful object. I say that I feel I caused her taking the veil, for I cannot but think she would have preferred the match her father proposed to her, if it had not been for the circumstances attending the close of her residence in France. If her heart had been unoccupied, she would, I think, have felt no insurmountable repugnance to the person whom her father had chosen for her husband—at least, not so great as that with which

she entered a cloister, and cut herself off from the world, for ever.

Whether she had any hope in the letter she wrote to me, that I might be so far moved by it as to come to Italy, and save her from her impending fate, I cannot accurately judge; but the strong inclination of my mind is to the negative. In the first place, there was no expression of doubt or hope throughout her letter; on the contrary, she speaks of her taking the veil, as of an event near and certain. Secondly, I am well convinced that her delicacy was too great and real thus indirectly to offer herself to a man, who, she must have been aware, had himself thrown the obstacles between them, which he afterwards affected to lament—nay (paradoxical as it may seem) which he did lament in fact. But, what should decide the question, her letter was written at a date,

which rendered my arrival in Italy before her sacrifice, next to impossible. The only reason, which for a moment caused me to entertain the contrary supposition, was, that if I had received her letter in time, I should, without hesitation, have set off for Italy, and saved her from so melancholy a fate, by making her mine at once and for ever. It is, indeed, since this final bar of impossibility has been placed between us, that the regrets, of which I have spoken at the beginning of this letter, have grown in force upon me. But, however I might have acted, I had no opportunity of choice, for, in consequence of being absent from Paris, and of my repeated change of abode just at that period, her letter followed me half over the Continent, for several months after the time I ought to have received it, and after the time when she had left the world for ever.

You may suppose that I have not omitted to visit the place where Antonia lived. It is a village, a few miles on this side Bologna, just at the foot of the Apennines. I found that her father was dead ; she herself, I was told, had been above two years in a convent in Tuscany, but where exactly, my informant could not say. He seemed to consider the other side of the Apennines a country which it was sufficient to know generically, but as for any specific detail, that was not to be looked for.

He pointed out, however, the house where Antonia's father had lived. It had, since his death, been sold, and had passed into the hands of strangers. It was in vain, therefore, even if I could have gained access to it, to have looked for any thing bearing reminiscence of Antonia ; but I went to inspect the house, because she had dwelt in it—and

the garden, because she had described it to me so often.

I do not wonder, indeed, at her admiration of its beauty. The house is an Italian villa, at the extremity of the village,—white, with a wide projecting roof, but in no way particularly remarkable, except for its situation: that, indeed, is eminently charming. The garden is extensive, and planted with the most luxuriant shrubs and flowers. At the extremity there is a terrace, with a seat upon it, which, during our meetings on our green knoll, above the Loire, Antonia had so often spoken of, and always with the fondness which we feel for the abode of our youth. The view from thence is truly enchanting. On one side the rich valley winds, studded with villas and villages, thickening into suburbs, till the towers of Bologna closed the horizon; on the other,

at the distance of a very few miles, the dark Apennines rise abruptly, as a barrier to the sight, tufted and covered with their deep chesnut woods—and, in one place, receding far into the distance, with hills and peaks rising above one another, the last mingled undistinguishably with the blue clouds which cover them. With the freedom which a traveller sometimes takes—which *I* always take, at least when I have an object,—I entered the garden, and seated myself upon the bench from which this prospect is visible. As I recognised the points of it, one by one, as I searched for them from Antonia's often repeated description,—I sighed to think that four eternal walls now bounded her actual, as well as her moral vision—that, formed to give and to receive happiness beyond the vast majority of her fellow-creatures, she tasted nothing but gloom and bitterness—and that *I* was the cause of all.



I hope, most truly and fervently, that as a Catholic she has comforts and consolations in her present mode of life, which I, heretic as I am, can scarcely believe—for, if I were fully assured that her situation is to her what it would be to me, I would move heaven and earth to find out (what I have hitherto avoided seeking) the exact position of her convent, and carry her off from it, in spite of the Pope, the Inquisition, and the Devil himself to boot.

But no—I hope she is tranquil at least, if not happy; I hope, above all, that I may never see her again to mar that tranquillity,—I have not sought her, and I shall not seek her; for, at all events, my heart has grown old enough to know that it is a very different thing to keep out of temptation, and to resist temptation when exposed to it.

## EXTRACT X.

“Get thee to a nunnery.”

HAMLET.

Florence, November, 1792.

MY DEAR FREWIN,—

THE Devil, sure, has a spite against me; and is resolved that if I don't fall, it shall not be for want of his laying traps and stumbling-blocks in my path. I had certainly made the best resolutions, with regard to Antonia,—and, what is more, I had stuck to them;—when, lo! they are broken for me, not by me,—and, shunning temptation on one side, I am driven headlong into it on the other.—“*Incidit in Scyllam*”—you know the rest.—But to the facts.

I went, last week, to attend the celebration of high mass, on the occasion of All Saints' Day, at the church attached to the Convent of ———. The part of the church where the nuns are, is partitioned off most effectually from that into which the public is admitted;—they are fully veiled, so that their voices, in singing the service, are the only feminine attribute which is perceptible to the *οἱ πολλοί*. This church is very celebrated for the manner in which the anthems, &c. are performed; and the whole service is esteemed to be of such magnificence and effect, that it is always the church which is singled out and recommended to foreigners who wish, on the occasion of great festivals, to see mass celebrated in all its pomp and splendour. And very splendid and magnificent it was, no doubt;—too much shifting of clothes and of posture among the priests.

I thought, for real simplicity and solemnity of effect,—but, certainly, as a whole, it was very gorgeous and imposing. The music, especially, from the assistance of the vast number of female voices, was fine in the extreme; and I came away, certainly, glad that I had gone, and with feelings moved and excited by the service I had witnessed. Perhaps the nuns may have somewhat contributed to this;—for, undoubtedly, I never see one of them without thinking of poor Antonia, and feeling a yearning of the heart, which fits it for soft and solemn impressions. In this instance, I had good reason to think of her, if I had known all;—and lucky it was for me, I did *not* know; for there certainly would have been a scene if I had—and then the Lord knows what might have happened! In two words, Antonia was one of the nuns, whose voices I was listening to,

—and whose appearance raised a general, but certainly only a general, feeling and remembrance of her! How do I know she was there?—From the best of all authorities, her own.

Two days after All Saints' Day, I was passing along the Lung' Arno about dusk, when a woman, wrapped in a veil, came close by my side, and asked me if my name were not Blount.—I was not the man to baulk an adventure; so I answered that it was; when she slipped a letter into my hands, and disappeared in an instant. I did not attempt to follow her, but continued my road homeward; somewhat curious, I confess, to see what this missive, thus mysteriously conveyed, might contain, but without the slightest conception of its being what it proved to be. It was a letter from Antonia!—The following is a copy of it:—

“ I have had a considerable struggle with myself before I could determine to write to you. It is, I believe, against the duties which I have taken upon me ; but I could not bear to think that you were so near me, and that you should have no tidings of even whether I exist or not. At the ceremony in the Church of ——— yesterday, I was within a few yards of the place where you were sitting ; I had a full view of you ; I saw you looking upon us, as we sat ranged above you. You little thought that a heart was beating there, almost to bursting, at the sight of you ! How I kept myself from fainting, when I first saw you, I cannot tell : I exerted, I believe, a stronger effort of self-command than I ever used before : and as, fortunately, we had to kneel almost immediately after, I had some little time to recover myself unobserved. Oh !

Philip!\* you can have no idea how seeing you again so suddenly, so unexpectedly, after so long time, affected me! The blood rushed to my heart, till I thought it would have burst; and then again it darted through my veins with the heat of fire. I thought that time, and penitential thoughts, and religious exercises, had disciplined me better; had enabled me—not to forget you, oh! no—but to think of you with the calmness befitting my present state. But the sight of you shattered the work of years in a moment! My memory leaped over the intervening time, and recalled the days which we passed together; the green knoll where we used to sit, and the Loire which rolled beneath our feet!

\* The original letter is in Italian, in which the name is *Filippo*, a much more soft and romantic appellation than its English synonyme. But in translating it, I thought it would seem affected to leave the English name in Italian.—ED.

But these dear dreams could not last ; they were dissolved almost as soon as they were formed ; for the voices of my sisters rose in the swell of the anthem ; and I remembered what and where I was ; that my thoughts ought to be fixed on heaven, and that they were wandering, instead, on man !

“ You are little altered, Philip ; scarcely at all. You are grown, indeed, into maturer manhood, but your eyes, your smile, your expression are the same ! I ought not to write thus ; it is sinful that I should do so : but can I, can I, let you be in the same city with me, breathe the same air, nay, be close to me as you were yesterday, and not write *once* to you, one word to say, that time, and absence, and duty have failed to eradicate you from my heart ?—that you are still loved, and ah ! that you will be ever ? You are prayed for too, Philip. In the



prayers, which I breathe, and they are fervent ones, for pardon for my thoughts thus wandering towards you—you are included in the supplication; and oh! those prayers are heard. My heart feels so relieved when I rise from them, that I feel assured, when this world, and its cares, and its pains are passed away, we shall meet to part no more, above! Farewell—farewell!—This is the last time you will ever hear from me; but you will always live in my heart!—Adieu! To all within these walls, I am sister Agnes,—but to you, I am still, I am ever, *your* Antonia.”

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You may suppose, dear Charles, that this letter moved me not a little. All the feelings which I had once experienced towards Antonia rose renewed within me; nay I loved her better, more fervently, than ever!

For, before, I let her go from me, when I might have made her mine; now, when so fatal a bar was interposed between us, I would have given worlds to be united to her for ever. The first impression on reading her letter was unmingled pleasure; a warm thrill of delight at being still dear to her flushed over me; but on reading it a second, more critically and dispassionately, self-accusation and regret succeeded: for I could not conceal from myself that her mind and her situation were manifestly at variance. It was impossible, with such conflicts, she could be happy, or even resigned. Nay, I perceived she scrupulously avoided saying any thing touching her happiness; if she were so, she would have said so in direct terms; of that I was convinced. She knew that her happiness would have been the dearest consolation she could have given me, and

she would not have withheld from me such a blessing. And her seeing me too; that must have re-awakened all her stronger feelings with regard to me; nay, she said as much. All my good resolutions took wing in a moment: I determined to see her, to speak with her, to fly with her, if I found matters were as I thought them. Oh, Frewin! I have done as much as man could do. I abstained from seeking her out, though I knew that a few inquiries must enable me to trace her. I sought her not—but we met; fate threw us in each other's way; it must be meant that we should yet be united. Is it possible to resist such a letter as she has written me? The love which she expresses purposely, is sufficient to set a heart of ice on fire; but the love which unconsciously burns in every word, which expresses so much more than is directly said; can a man

merely mortal let matters rest as they are? I cannot, I know: I will not attempt, I will not affect it. I have not sought this, I repeat; but as it has 'fallen in my path,' human nature cannot avoid its prosecution.

I have been every day to the church of the Convent of ———, till I have been almost afraid of being remarked. Only a few nuns attend the mass on usual occasions, and whether any of the veiled figures be the one I seek, it is impossible for me to discover. I have not been able to procure any means of getting the letter, which I carry perpetually with me, conveyed; for it is a matter of some delicacy, I assure you, for her sake even more than mine. Thus matters stand at present; how they will end, Heaven only knows!

## EXTRACT XI.

“ Hold, take this letter ; early in the morning  
See thou deliver it.”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

[The Answer to Antonia's Letter.]

“ WHAT I experienced on the receipt of your letter, it would be vain to attempt to describe to you ; I shall not attempt it. From what you say were your own sensations on seeing me in the church, you may, perhaps, conceive it ; otherwise I am sure you could not. Oh, Antonia ! the joy, the unmingled, the rapturous joy, with which I first read the expressions of your unabated affection, soon gave way before the remem-

brance of the gulf betwixt us; the chilling reflection that where you are, thither can I not enter to join you! You will, perhaps, think it an instance of the exaggeration with which you used to reproach me of old, when I say, that during the ceremony on All-Saints'-Day, while I was looking upon you and your sisters seated above me, my thoughts were fixed upon *you*. Yet it is natural it should have been so. For though I had no idea that you yourself were before my eyes, yet I never see the religious habit upon a woman, but I think of you; but I think of (and curse it as I think) the bar which is fixed between us. Time has wrought no change in my feelings concerning you. Separated, and so separated, as we have been for years, my heart still yearns towards you with the same fondness which it felt when I first spoke to you of love. Nay, with more;

for time has ripened it, and given it increased powers by duration. I am no longer a boy, Antonia: I surely must know myself now, or I never shall. And I feel that my love for you is united with my very being; that it has become *part* of my heart; as long as that heart endures, *it* will endure. I have proved it through many an eventful hour; it is now permanent beyond all doubt or hazard.

“ I do not make professions of the truth of what I say; I conceive it would be lowering myself, and you, through me, if I did. You would not have placed confidence in one to whom it could be necessary to say that he does not speak falsely. But yet, I do not speak the *whole* truth; I cannot do so. Words have always been found weak to paint the *fullness* of a love like that which binds me to you.

“ I would not write thus—cost me what it

might, I would suppress, the expression at least, of these feelings totally, but that I am convinced *you are not happy where you are*. Antonia, you are not happy! you are not even resigned; not only the whole tenor of your letter shows it, but if you were so, I am confident you would have told me in direct and unequivocal words. You say nothing on the subject; then, you are *unhappy*. You know the assurance of your happiness would be the greatest blessing I could know on earth; you would not have withheld it from me if it had been consistent with truth.\* You are unhappy in your present condition; you would be happier if it were changed. Need I say what change I offer to you? My

\* Some of the foregoing expressions are almost *verbatim*, identical with those on this subject in the preceding letter. But as the two were written about the same time, it is very natural that the same words should rise to the pen, to express the same feelings.—ED.



arms are open to receive you; my heart, my hand are at your feet. Fly with me to my own country, where freedom is inseparable from the soil, and where the determination of a rash moment cannot bind to misery for life. Come with me, dear, dear Antonia, to that English home, where, if any where on earth, Content has chosen his abode. Come, and, with those capabilities of giving and of receiving happiness which Heaven has showered upon you, *give* happiness, beyond the power of words to paint, to a heart which adores you; *receive* that happiness which the uninterrupted, unhidden intercourse of affection like our's cannot fail to yield!

“I know you will hesitate on account of the vows you have made; of your having dedicated yourself, as you will say, to the service of Heaven. I do not propose to enter

into any argument with regard to our respective creeds. You know of old that I am no bigot on that score; but pause maturely before you cast away the happiness of your own life, and of one who doats upon you, for a mistaken prejudice. Think whether the Heaven you serve can demand the sacrifice of the temporal happiness of one of its fairest creatures, solely from a few words having been spoken in the rash bitterness of a disappointed spirit. With your warm and keen feelings, and buoyant and energetic mind, you never were formed for the cloister. You know, Antonia, this truth; and you know that you become more and more convinced of it daily. You were formed to shed contentment and joy upon a happy home; to be the centre of a circle, whose happiness springs from and returns to you! Dear Antonia, how often you have spoken

to me with delight of that home, which you had known only as a child; but which you loved enthusiastically, because it *had* been the home of your childhood? I have been there, Antonia. I made a pilgrimage thither before I had been in Italy a month. At that time, I did not expect ever to see you again; and my heart swelled even to tears, as I sat upon *the bench on the terrace*, of which you had spoken so often and so fondly, and as I recognized the scene which lived in my heart from your description. It is in such scenes as these, dearest, that your lot should be cast, amid the charities and amenities of *home*; a word which, being peculiar to our language, proves at least, that the thing it expresses has more need of expression with us, than in any other country? —Do you remember my teaching you this word? and your saying that it was easier to

speaking, and of finer sound than any other word of my language that you had heard?

“Dear, dear Antonia, I could converse thus with you for ever. One recollection calls up another, till I could fill a volume with questions of the heart, all beginning “Do you remember?” Yes! you *do* remember: I have no fear that you forget any touch of feeling during our former intercourse. Oh! Antonia, let that intercourse be renewed! Let it be made nearer, dearer, because more permanent, than ever! Come with me to make the happiness of my “English fire-side,”—a scene for which you may well exchange an “Italian sky;” beautiful, and dear to you, as the last is and must be.

“Do not decide hastily. Extreme as my anxiety will be till I know your determination, I had rather it were not hastily made. On the one hand, I should be loth

that you should hereafter say, or feel without saying, that your resolution had been taken in a moment of tumultuous feeling, when your judgment had not fair play. On the other, I should be still more deeply grieved, if you allowed your prejudices to prevent your weighing the matter maturely, and exerting your excellent understanding upon it in all its bearings. Use your reason, Antonia; let it freely work, and I do not fear for the result.

“ One thing more only I have to beg. If, as I most sincerely trust will not be the case, —if you should in the first instance decide upon remaining where you are, and thereby consigning me to wretchedness,—admit me, at any rate, to say a few words to you in person, before you pronounce my doom for ever. The meanest criminal is not condemned unheard; and I am not that to you,

Antonia. It is very possible that there may be some parts of this letter which may jar upon your mind unexplained. I have written under an agitation of spirits so great, as utterly to incapacitate me from weighing expressions nicely, and judging of forms of speech. My ideas and feelings have been too eager for utterance to pause about the mode; and moreover, I write in a language with which I am not thoroughly familiar. Besides, one-half hour's conversation is worth a world of letters. Any momentary misapprehension is cleared away at once, instead of encreasing into importance by furnishing food for correspondence. An objection has the reasons to refute it opposed to it at once, instead of growing upon the mind, merely from having remained there for some time unchecked. If, as I trust your strong sense will lead you to do, you decide to leave at

once the cold cloister in which you are buried ; it is, perhaps, as well that we should not previously meet ; but if the bent of your mind be the other way, I entreat you, I conjure you, allow me to see you *once* before your resolution is finally taken. Surely, Antonia, I may ask this much at your hands.

“ Dear, dearest love, my heart expands with unutterable feelings at being thus once again in communication with you. Our young days are renewed to my heart once more ; our ‘ moonlight walks by the Loire ’ will, at last, receive their fitting consequence ! Adieu, best-beloved ! I need not say with what feverish impatience I shall await your answer.

“ P. B.”

[Antonia's reply.]

“ I said, when I wrote to you before, that that would be the last time I should address

you ; but I feel that your letter requires some answer, and that it would be acting unworthily by you, if I did not give it :— but, after this, our correspondence *must* close. Yes, Philip ! this intercourse must cease : my peace of mind—my welfare here and hereafter, alike demand it. I have taken some days to weigh the contents of your letter ; though, perhaps, I ought not to have admitted them to any consideration. But I would not that you should think I had treated your propositions slightly ; and (shall I confess it ?) my heart pleaded strongly for you. I *have* weighed maturely all you have said, and worthy it is of your warm and noble heart. I recognize your ardour of feeling, and uncompromising frankness of character, in every line. I *do* believe you, Philip ; it would be a paltry affectation if I pretended that I did not. Your unreserv-



ed and generous offers prove at once, did your expressions need any proof, the truth of all you say. I believe, too, that you know your feelings, and that you do not speak merely from the impulse of youthful passion. I believe that passion to be matured and firm; and sweet, sweet has that conviction been to my heart. Oh! Philip, that heart clings too fondly to you still;—bitter, bitter has been my struggle to wrench it from you now!

“ But, No!—my vows were not breathed ‘in a rash moment;’ they were the fruit of thought and meditation; and they cannot be broken without casting deadly sin upon my soul. When the thought of you has risen between me and my duties, I have, as it were, compounded with myself for its admittance, by the reflection that it was impossible we could ever meet again,

and by joining your name and image in my supplications to the Throne of Mercy. But if I now were to bring these thoughts to action, and prove false to the religious oaths which bind me, their source would be too apparent; I should have been serving the world and Satan, and not Him to whose service I am sworn!

“ I believe you to have been candid with me: I will be so likewise. You are right in your supposition; I am not happy in my present state. If my lot had been so cast as to have placed me in the bosom of a *home*\* such as you describe, I will not deny that I think I should have been more fitted for that sphere than for the one which I now fill. But it has been ordered otherwise; and I must fulfil my destiny as best I may. Yet do not think I am miserable. No! It is true I have not the strong enthusiasm,

\* This word is in English in the original letter.—ED.

the *unction*, which prove, that of some of my sisters this is the real vocation.—But I enjoy calmness at least; and my religious duties are always, while they last, soothing to my soul. I am not happy, I confess it. Love mingled too early and too largely in my cup of life, for this draught not to be distasteful to me. But GUILT has not yet been mixed with it; and I feel that if it were, it would be far and far more bitter than all that I have tasted yet. It is vain to argue the point, with respect to how far my vows are binding. You cannot but know that all you say on that head is sophistry. If they had been compulsory, some shadow of excuse might, perhaps, have been raised for breaking them; but they were made voluntarily, and they have severed me from the world for ever! My conscience cannot but regard them as sacred,

and as we act according to our conscience, so shall we be judged.

“ Ah, Philip !—my heart has pleaded for you far more strongly than my reason, which you invoke so earnestly. And now that my resolve is fixed, I will own that I have once or twice been shaken in my determination almost to its fall. But then the idea that I should be an apostate and guilty thing has risen before me, and I have shrunk back appalled. No ! on the path of guilt I will not enter ; you yourself would not, cannot, desire that I should do so. The course you urge me to is such *to my* eyes, and according to our light must we act, and shall be tried. The fearful sentence

‘ *Voi che entrate, lasciate ogni speranza*’

might well be fixed over the path of sin ; if once I entered it, I should never enjoy

one moment more of happiness, or even of hope.

“I will not see you, Philip ; I am sure when you have read this, you will no longer desire it. I understand all you have said fully ; I can figure to myself all you would say, but it could be of no avail ; or perhaps I dread that it should be of avail,—that I should be persuaded, though I could not be convinced. If it were not impossible that we should meet, I would not say thus much ; but in this, the last communication we can ever hold together in this world, why should I strive to conceal from you how unboundedly my heart is yours ? Make no attempt to see me. My reputation, nay my life, would, in all likelihood, be sacrificed if you did. Neither will I again receive any letter from you. I have broken up the medium of intercourse which has hitherto existed ; it is

the only one possible, and any attempt on your part to open a new one, would be attended with little less danger to me than an endeavour to effect a meeting. I distrust myself, and, therefore, I have rendered it impossible for me to be exposed to temptation.

“ And now dear, ever-dear Philip, it only remains for me to bid you farewell. Yet I pause before I can bring myself to say that last word to you, which will close our intercourse for ever. I scarcely know whether I am glad, or whether I should grieve, at its having been thus renewed for a moment. It has broken, it is true, upon the calm of my life, and has thrown my thoughts and feelings into a channel, which it will require, I fear, much time and painful exertion to force them from again. But then I have received the assurance of your unabated, nay of your

increased love for me, for I do believe that “you love me better than ever.” How dear that conviction is to my heart, dearest, dearest, I need not, I cannot say to you.

“And yet, postpone it as I may, I must say farewell, at last. I send you with this a morsel of my clipped hair, place it by the side of the long tress I formerly gave you—(I do not fear but that you have preserved it)—and when you look upon them together, you will regard them as a token that no change of time, of situation, I might almost say, of existence, could alter *my* feelings towards *you*. May God for ever bless you.”

## EXTRACT XII.

“ Away for England !—————  
On toward Calais, ho !”

KING JOHN.

Florence, November 1792.

YOU will see me, my dear friend, in a short time after the receipt of this letter. You will be surprised at this piece of news ; but so it is. I am about to bring my long peregrinations to a close, and return to England direct. You will easily guess that something peculiar must have happened thus to induce me, being at Florence, to set off across the Alps in the middle of winter, without even going on to Rome, to seeing which, you know, I have always looked for-



ward with so much eagerness. But I would not remain another month in Italy, for the iron crown of the Lombards; I will get back to Dodderidge, as being, of all places to which I have access, the most unlike every thing I have been seeing lately. Do send down to old Ward, and tell her to get the house habitable for me, as quick as she can. I shall be home by Christmas, now. "Why what has come over the man?" you will say. Truly, Frewin, I have scarcely the heart to tell. Perhaps the enclosed may throw some light upon the subject.\* You may guess my feelings at the receipt of this. Truly I had expected to come to England, as soon as I am doing now, but with my companion for life by my side.

I cannot say that my first impulse was to

\* The enclosed was a copy of the letter, given in the foregoing extract.

obey her. I saw clearly that if I could reach her, I should be able to prevail upon her to accompany me; and I persuaded myself that it would be for her happiness, as well as my own. For two days, I went about with a letter about me, imploring, insisting on an interview—seeking some way to get it delivered: but on reading over more calmly what she said, I saw such an air of candour and truth beaming through the whole, I saw that her impression of the guilt of breaking her vows was so strong, (it must have been so, indeed, to counteract so powerful a passion) that I determined to yield to her determination, and not to mar her happiness more than I have done already. Setting aside the danger to which I must expose her, by endeavouring to force a communication without her consent,—I saw, indeed, that the reasons with which I had been de-

ceiving myself were, as she said, sophistry! —No! I would not, I could not bear to lead her into what she considered guilt!

So I ordered Eustache, to his great amazement, to pack up my things, and get my passports for France; and the day after tomorrow, I shall be rolling northward. Dear Frewin, I shall be rejoiced to see you again; for few scape-graces, like myself, have the blessing of so good a friend. You will find me, I think, altered a good deal, even since we parted at Paris two years ago. This last business has been, I will confess it, a heavy blow upon me. I had suffered enough in these matters before! Oh! these women, these women, they were born to be the fate and the bane of my life; and yet I have enjoyed some happy moments with them, too. But the happiness was always counted by moments, and the unhappiness by months and years! And,

after all, I have not, I fear, suffered half so much as I have caused suffering. Poor Antonia, now ! Here am I thinking myself exceedingly wretched, and I am so : but I have change of scene, and active exertion if I choose it, to vary the current of my thoughts, and give fresh impulse to my energies ; but she, dear, dear, unhappy creature !—has nothing but the monotonous routine of a conventual life, and the four walls of that infernal convent, (which I wish were burned to the ground) to draw her feelings from the train of bitter sensation into which they have run.

“ Relentless walls whose darksome round contains

Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains,  
Shrines where their vigils pale-eyed virgins keep,  
And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep :  
E'en here, where frozen chastity retires,  
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.”

—— I might go on through the whole poem,\*—and, with the exception of those passages which relate to the retrospection of guilt, and the calling of the lover, it would all be applicable in her mouth. All the agonizing regrets, and convulsive throes and contests of passion, would find, alas! a fitting speaker in poor, poor Antonia. Oh! Charles, I have loved that woman as I never loved any but her; and yet I have caused all the wretchedness which she has known! I have been the black spirit of her destiny—the *Ebène* who has attended her lot through life.† And, notwithstanding this, I have the face to complain of what I have suffered, and suffer from my intercourse with women!

But I am soured, and out of humour to-

\* Eloisa to Abelard.

† Mr. Blount seems to allude to Voltaire's *Apologue* of *Le Blanc et le Noir*.—*Ed.*

day, with myself, and every thing, and every body ; I will not vent my spleen upon you any more, but say at once, not adieu, but *au revoir*. Believe me, I look forward to nothing, at this moment, with so much pleasure, as that of again shaking you by the hand.

Ever your's most affectionately,

P. B.

## EXTRACT XIII.

“ But now I need the bustling world,  
The excitement which its vortex gives—  
For while in that my heart is whirled,  
Then only can it say it lives.  
Although I feel contempt and hate  
For all I do, and bear, and see,—  
Yet still it is my wretched fate  
To feel how needful 'tis to me ! ”

ANON.

[From the Diary.]

London, February, 1794.

WHEN I look back to what my ideas were, when I returned to England thirteen or fourteen months ago, as to the life I should probably lead here, I cannot but smile at the inaccuracy of my anticipations. Truly we

are not often very excellent prophets of our own doings. But yet, at my age, it was much more natural that the pain, which tugged at my heart-strings, should seek to be numbed by dissipation, than find soothing in retirement. I had not been a fortnight at Dodderidge before I found this out,—and what has been the consequence? Why, 'faith I don't very much like to look at the consequence; for no man can lead a life of dissipation for a twelvemonth, without having some points of reminiscence which he would wish blotted from the calendar. And yet, a desperate twinge has come across me occasionally. Poor Antonia! her fate sticks closer to my heart than I could wish it. Who could have thought that I should have loved that woman so dearly, so engrossingly, when a word would have made her mine, and I would not speak it? And why, for-



sooth? because I would not sacrifice my liberty! And what have I done with my liberty since then?—I have added several notches to the score against me; I have increased the store of unhappiness for my age to look back upon, and I have made several very deserving persons wretched! And what am I doing now—now that I don't care a button for my liberty, and would have sacrificed it to Antonia if I could? Why, I am doing much the same as I have done, only that I am crowding more into a shorter space of time.

Why, then, do I not pull short up, when I know so well that I am going in a hand-gallop to the devil? Why, because the ride is strong excitement, and without excitement, I cannot exist.

“What is peppered the highest is surest to please:”

my palate has become as vitiated with regard

to excitement, as Garrick's was with regard to praise.

It is excitement, merely excitement for its own sake, that I seek; for after all, the life I lead has no charms in itself;—and, sometimes, I could almost find in my heart to finish the farce at once, and knock my brains out against the next wall, from sheer depression and disgust. When I consider the objects, about which the men I live amongst are so eager; when I see their emptiness, their shallowness, their ignorance, their utter want of heart, it makes me sick absolutely. I feel that I was meant, by nature, for something better than this; that I had once energies which might have led to something; but they are worn out—gone—expended upon loves and *liaisons*, till they are fallen into a state utterly lethargic and effete. Neither am I so young as I was; I am ap-

proaching that corner-age, thirty, which, when once turned, ambition ought to be the ruling passion of a man who is worth any thing; Love's day should be set by that time. But I have not energy for ambition; I had it once, but it is wasted; the ten years of my life which should have prepared a career for the next ten worthy of being followed, have been fooled away; they are gone, and have left nothing but regrets, and heart-aches, behind them.

There is Frewin, now, whom I used to consider such a stoic with regard to women. They have made his happiness, and my misery. It is impossible that any man can be happier in his family than he is. His wife is beautiful and amiable to boot; his eldest child beginning to prattle; his youngest, a fine chubby thing in arms, that even I, much as I detest babies, think charming, and can

*bear to touch!* How is it that he has all these blessings, and I have none of them, though my life has been almost devoted to women, and he scarcely ever spoke to half-a-dozen, before his wife? I believe that is the very reason. I have frittered my heart away—while his was whole and healthful to stake upon that cast which has made the fortune to his life. Ah! if I had married Antonia when I first knew her, what a difference would it have made in my fate! But, in those days, I regarded marriage as Lord Rochester did,—as a curse on the dog that bit him: and truly I have had my reward.

And what shall I do, when I begin to descend the hill, if I feel this vacuum and these pangs before I am at its summit? Truly, that is a part of the picture I do not overmuch like to look to. I cannot look within, for my heart

is chilled and shrunken, and probably that is the cause why I am obliged to cast my eyes abroad, and seek my excitation in the vortex and bustle of the world. Not that I care a pinch of snuff for the world—not that I am not disgusted every ten minutes with something or other I see going on around me ; often with something I am doing myself ; but still I cannot live without it, or out of it. I am like a man become so confirmed a drunkard that he is obliged to begin the day with drams, before he is fit to do anything. -

But what can have led me into so gloomy a train of thought to-day ? I had a feverish night, I believe ; I dreamed of Antonia, and my rest is always disturbed, when I do that. But I must not think of her ; I must not think of these things at all ; they are of no avail, and they only serve to make me hipped

and wretched. I will go out; my phaeton is at the door, and it is nearly three o'clock, when Fanny promised to meet me. And what am I doing in that quarter? *N'importe*; we shall see as we get along.

## EXTRACT XIV.

“ And how felt *he*, that wretched man  
Reclining there—while memory ran  
O’er many a year of guilt and strife,  
Flew o’er the dark flood of his life,  
Nor found one sunny resting-place,  
Nor brought him back one branch of grace !  
“ There *was* a time” he said in mild  
Heart-humbled tones—“ thou blessed child,  
When young and haply pure as thou,  
I look’d and pray’d like thee—but now ——”

LALLA ROOKH.

[From the Diary.]

London, March, 1794.

IN my early years, I lived with my family a little way out of London. Since that time the rapid increase of building has made the place I allude to *quite* town; but it was then

partly in the fields ; and my mother being an invalid caused us to choose that situation for the sake of the air. These were, perhaps, the happiest days of my life ; they were certainly the most innocent ; for the contamination of School had not yet touched my youthful mind and heart, and the cultivation of both was looked to with no common care and tenderness.

As I write, it scarcely seems to me possible that I should myself be the subject of what I say. It is much more as if I looked back to what I know of others, than to that which has happened to myself. For I was early in the world, in the world's ways, in the world's wickedness. I was entirely my own master at a very early period of life ; a privilege of which I was sufficiently glad and proud at the time, and which I have as sufficiently regretted since.



It is not my purpose here to enter into a narrative of what I have done and borne since that period; I merely mean to commit to paper an incident which occurred to me a few days ago, and recalled, in a very forcible manner, the long dormant train of feeling associated with my youthful days.

The house in which those early days were chiefly spent, is, as I have said, some little way out of town. Since then, I have passed it very rarely; perhaps not above two or three times. My habits and haunts were not such as were likely to lead me to so remote a situation; and the circle which formerly existed there, has (alas! and alas again!) been, long since, wholly broken up and dispersed. When I *have* passed it on those few and rare occasions, I certainly have looked up at the windows, and sighed heavily as I have done so; but I never allowed such feel-

ings to rest more than a moment in my heart; I always passed on as fast as my feet, or my horse, could carry me, and sought, in acceleration of pace, dissipation of the thoughts at the moment existing in the mind. But the last time I passed it was under different circumstances; and has, whether I would or no, made a deeper impression upon me:— I had with me a young creature whose ruin that day was to seal.

I never was, at the worst periods of my life, systematically, what is called a seducer. I never deliberately set about the seduction of any one. And yet, I have more than once been the means of leading a fellow-creature into error, of plunging a fellow-creature into guilt. This apparent contradiction is easily explained; indeed, it cannot appear one to most men of a few years' experience in the world. I do not now

speak of cases of higher passion, where innocent admiration almost imperceptibly ripens into equivocal interest, which again gradually increases into criminal love;—where no plans of seduction are made or resorted to, but where the two hearts, by gentle degrees, incline towards each other, as it were by one accord, regardless of all bar or obstacle; as the two trees, in the device, bend simultaneously till they unite, unmindful of the deep and rapid stream which flows between them.\* It is not to such cases that I now allude; indeed the term “seduction” is seldom applied to *them* by any one. It is more frequently used with reference to persons where, not marriage, but inequality of condition is the obstacle (for in higher life such instances very rarely occur), where the very

\* I have seen a seal, with the device, described above, and the motto “Le destin nous sépare, le penchant nous unit.”

difference of rank increases, probably, the admiration at first, and the devotedness afterwards, of the unfortunate girl; and, at a first view, necessitates such an intention on the man's part from the very beginning. But such men draw a distinction in morals; which, after all, perhaps, is not wholly unfounded in justice and reason. There are many of them who scruple to be the original corrupter, yet are quite ready to take advantage of previous corruption; that is, where the corruption has destroyed virtue, but not delicacy—has undermined principle, but has not yet substituted immodesty or coarseness. But men who begin with this belief, and these intentions, are not unfrequently mistaken. They find that they really are debauching an innocent mind, where they imagined some earlier lover had spared them that guilt. There are, for instance, several

female professions, which I need not indicate, that point out, to such persons, those who are engaged in them as, what they would call, *fair game*. That this general supposition is extremely often false, there can be no hesitation in asserting; but it is some time before the exception is discovered; for it is, indeed, most difficult to distinguish between the truth and falsehood of assertions made invariably in all cases alike. But why not, it may be said, stop short when you *do* discover what it is you are doing? Alas! he must be one very little skilled in human nature who would put the question. To say nothing of the real (it is difficult to find an exact word—suppose I use the most general) *attachment* which may have sprung up in the meantime, we all know the force of that most influential feeling, the desire of success. Such men do not like to rest under the galling

consciousness of having attempted and failed; and they must, be it recollected, from the circumstances, be among those whose minds and hearts have undergone the chilling action of frequency and self-indulgence.

This is a general view of the matter; but I believe it to be of frequent application; and it is undoubtedly so to my immediate case. The person to whom I allude belongs to one of the professions I have noticed; and she has, in addition, a levity of manners which contributed to mislead me. There was something, however, very striking and brilliant in this levity. Her conversation had quickness and point, if not wit,—and great buoyancy, spirit, and animation. She was frequent in laughter, and even loud; yet far from being coarse or boisterous.\* But

\* “ Her laugh, full of life, without any controul,  
But the sweet one of gracefulness, rang from her  
soul ! ” — MOORE.

though it was by no means vulgar or ungraceful, it at first conveyed a suspicion to me, that she had not any great acuteness or depth of feeling. It is not often, indeed, that this great gaiety, and liveliness, and repartee, are co-existent with much sensibility; but *when* they are, nothing can by possibility be more delightful. They have all the advantages of contrast and relief, added to their own intrinsic charms and merits.

In person, I cannot say that she is beautiful; but she has a youthfulness and freshness, and brightness of appearance, very much in keeping with her unrepressed joyousness of manner. Her face, perhaps, inclines to be too round and full; but her lips are the reddest, and her teeth the whitest that ever were seen; and they are often seen, in the frequency of her bright and

good-humoured smile. She has a fine, open, dancing eye, and abundance of hair, flying usually over her face in fifty directions, and requiring her constantly to raise her pretty plump hand, to repress it into its proper quarters.

In what I have said of this person, I find that I have mixed my subsequent knowledge of her real innocence of character with the first impressions which her manner and appearance made upon me. For, truth to say, all this, at the time, seemed to me to be mingled with that indescribable air which bespeaks such light manner to be indicative of strong animal spirits subduing self-reproach and shame; which they do the more readily in one, whom the early want of strong grounding in the principle, together with the effect of general example and countenance has rendered little sensible of the real degra-



dation of the position of a fallen woman.

But I was mistaken.

I did not, however, discover my mistake for a considerable time ; and when I was at last convinced that I really had been in error, I did *not* retract. I speak the truth, when I say, that I was pained at the discovery ; but that pain was not sufficient to deter me from my pursuit. Habit and a long course of self-gratification, and my increasing need of strong excitement to feel at all—these, added to the other motives of action, of which I have spoken above, induced me, after some remonstrances from that most disagreeable person, Conscience, to continue to advance. Of the circumstances which followed, I shall make no detail. Suffice it, that a short time ago, we were passing together the house of which I have already spoken, on our way to a village a few miles

from town, situated in that direction. I had come this road, not, as will readily be supposed, for the sake of passing this house; but that I might *not* pass a house which lay on the other road, by the inhabitants of which I did not exactly desire to be seen so accompanied. The day happened to be Sunday; or rather, I should say, the day *was* Sunday, for there was no chance in the selection;—inasmuch as it was the only day in the week, on which my companion was wholly mistress of her own time. As we approached the house, I looked up at the well-known windows as usual; and, I don't know how it was, a very *unusual* sensation of self-accusation and reproach came across me. Still I should, I think, have passed on, minding it very little, if it had not been for a circumstance, trifling enough in itself, but which strongly contributed to increase the remorseful feeling of which I have spoken.

It was about one o'clock, and the people were coming from Church. Just as we passed the door, a nursery-maid was knocking at it, accompanied by two children, a girl about eleven years old, and a boy about nine, each in the neat nice dress befitting the day, and with a red-morocco prayer-book in their hand. My tears, on the instant, sprang to my throat; but I gulped them, and passed on without speaking. The picture of my former state, of my former self, was thus, as I may say, presented to my eyes; and what, I said inwardly, what am I doing *now*? I looked, as it were, into the mirror of reflected time; and I beheld myself as I was when at the age of the child just entering my house. I recollected when, like him, I used to return from the worship of my God to the execution of His will; when the deep and reverential piety

which swelled in my young heart at the simple and solemn prayer, the burst of sacred music, and the mild yet fervent exhortation of the white-haired minister, softened, as I returned to my home, into the charities of domestic affection, the innocence and unservedness of childish love! My heart was light, for it knew not sin, nor sin's consequence; the tears which I had shed, had left no furrows of guilty passion behind them. The tears that I have shed since —— but of these I will not, I cannot, speak.

Why do I write thus? I wish to note an individual contrast; not to generalize in reflections like these. What I am about to say, would appear childish and trivial to many; but it was that very childishness which gave it its effect upon my mind. It was the reflection of what were my misdoings, my objects of ambition, my rewards, in those days, which

struck upon me in such severe and violent contrast.

One particular Sunday, of about that very period, rose upon my recollection with all the unaccountable distinctness and minuteness of suddenly-revived memory. I had begun the previous week in great disgrace, and ended it in high favour. I consequently had all that additional flush of happy feeling which the passing away of pain is sure to give. I had been very idle, and very passionate, and, at last, as I remember, had gone so far, in a burst of boyish fury, as to apply to my sisters' governess, under whose general tuition I still was, many opprobrious epithets, accompanied by as many oaths;—the direct crime of which was not a little aggravated by the surprise occasioned by finding me so familiar with such language. I was punished as punishment was conducted with us—

namely by banishment and solitude. I shall never forget the bitterness of self-reproach, even of remorse, which I felt during the two days, and, still more, the two nights which my penance lasted. If I had committed a deep crime, I could not have felt more; nay, I have committed what might almost be considered such, without feeling half so much. I cried myself to sleep, and awoke from being choked with sobbing; and the reflections, which I made during the long dreary day, influenced, I do believe, my temper and my conduct for years afterward. When I was released, I applied with redoubled diligence, and profited accordingly. That very day, I was put into the Greek Grammar; and, besides learning the character, (no inconsiderable task at that age)—I, to use the schoolboy phrase, “could say down to the end of  $\mu\sigma\sigma\alpha$ ,” before Saturday

night. I regained favour gradually during the week ; and, at the end of it, I was rewarded by the permission (the withholding of which had been part of my former punishment) to wear *my first pair of boots*. I shall never forget the delight with which I pulled them on for the first time ;—a delight scarcely at all lessened by their being excruciatingly too tight for me, and needing the assistance of a stout footman, and of an infinity of soap, to get them on at all. I recollect walking to Church in them that Sunday, with the exaltation of the hero of a triumph, and certainly suffering the torments of a martyr.

All these circumstances are very childish—but they are real ; and any real feeling will always have its weight. These and other circumstances, *too* childish, perhaps, to put upon paper, rose in actual presence

to my view, on the very different Sunday of which I first made mention. And such, I thought, were my pleasures in those days!—what a different signification the term carries with it now! My deepest offence was a childish ebullition of rage; my severest punishment, the seclusion of a couple of days; my highest reward, an article of wished-for finery!—And now ——— \*

What, indeed, were the circumstances of the *present* Sunday? I was about to bring certain and deep unhappiness on a person enjoying more happiness than many are given to enjoy;—I was about to plunge an innocent creature into irrevocable guilt and shame!

\* It was this passage, and the following, which prompted me to choose the motto prefixed to this chapter. The quotation would probably have suggested itself to Mr. Blount, if the beautiful poem, from whence it is taken, had, at that time, been published. The same remark applies to the note at p. 66.—ED.



Was I the same being whose pursuits, and wishes, and fears, and feelings, had been so sinless?—I, whose whole habits of mind and heart had so long flowed in a fierce, turbid, and unhealthful course? That mind had become polluted and perverted, if not utterly vicious;—that heart now needed strong and stimulating food, no matter at what cost or sacrifice.

I was long silent before my companion noticed it. *She*, indeed, had sufficient cause to be absent and abstracted herself. Let any woman, who has done wrong, call to her recollection the few hours which preceded her fall; after the resolution was made, and before it was accomplished. They are “a phantasma,”—though not, perhaps, “a hideous dream;” at all events there is, at such times, a leaden, I might say, a *dogged* oppression of the spirits, which spreads

a misty feeling of unconsciousness over the whole mind and frame. My companion was in very much such a state, at this time. Her eye was less bright than usual, and more closed; and the blood had mounted to her cheek, and settled there in a large round spot of hot and lurid red. It was *I* who at last broke the silence, and I did it with a motive little, I think, to be expected.

What I am about to say would, I know, subject me to the laughter, if not the contempt, of two classes of persons. The one is that of those gentlemen to whom I have described myself too nearly to assimilate; the second is a very large proportion of the other sex.—The bad actions, with which I have to reproach myself, received no addition on that day.

## EXTRACT XV.

“ Pleasures of memory !—oh, supremely blest,  
And justly proud beyond a poet’s praise,  
If the pure confines of thy tranquil breast  
Contain, indeed, the subject of thy lays !  
By me how envied !—for, to me  
The herald still of misery,  
Memory makes her influence known  
By sighs, and tears, and grief alone;  
I greet her as the fiend, to whom belong  
The vulture’s ravening beak, the raven’s funeral song !

*Written on a blank leaf of the*

PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

[From the Diary.]

Dodderidge, October, 1794.

It was a fine fiction of the ancients to represent Forgetfulness as the reward purchased by a certain degree of expiatory punishment. It was a fine fiction, for it had its

origin in a natural feeling,—one of the very few of which this can be said in their clumsy and profligate mythology. But *this* is real poetry, and, like all real poetry, closely akin to truth. Alas ! how many there are among us who would wish “to steep” not their “senses,” but their soul “in forgetfulness!”—now many there are to whom the waters of Lethe would be truly a nectareous draught !

I am well aware that there are many also who would throw from them such a gift at once ; to whom, indeed, it would be a curse. The days of youth are, like the spring of the physical year, the sowing-time of the seeds of happiness ; and it would be hard indeed if *some* of it did not fall upon good ground, and bear fruit and increase. There is scarcely any of us, it is to be hoped, who cannot, within the circle of his own knowledge, point

to some case of this kind ; to one who would spurn at *Iæthe*. Let us suppose, for instance, a mother surrounded by her family,

“ ————— that small realm

Of love, which owns her as its only queen,  
That world of heart of which she is the axis ;”—

—from all the sweet gradations from maturing intellect and ripening loveliness in her eldest born, to the first dawning of human reason and beauty in the smiles and lisped words of her infant one ; let us suppose her early flood of the heart not to have run to waste, or to more destructive overflow, but to have resembled rather a full, deep, and rapid stream, giving joy and brightness to all around ; let us suppose her, to drop all figure, to have been united to him whom she would have singled from all mankind ; whose youthful passion for her has become

matured into the strength and stability of manly love, gaining in depth and tenderness what it has lost (if it has lost any thing) in fervency ; who can say, in short, with all the truth of fondness,

“ How much the wife is dearer than the bride !”

—let us figure to ourselves a woman thus placed, giving and receiving these blessings, sharing and inspiring these affections ; would *she* drink of Lethe ?

But, alas ! there are the thorns of worldly pursuits, the stony ground of hard or callous dispositions, the scanty soil of slight and shallow heartedness, to choke and waste the good seed which the Great Sower scatters more or less lavishly over the early lives of all. In this, as in all things, the good stands single, while the evil has a thousand branches. There is only one line which will

carry the arrow to its mark ; every other direction, even to the breadth of a hair, will make the effort of the archer fruitless. If the picture which I have drawn above be recognized as a portrait by a few, how many must regard it to be only a fancy-piece ! Let us look for a moment upon its opposite. Let us turn to her who has been sacrificed for gold or for station, by parental cupidity and ambition ; who has been sold into a slavery worse than that of the negro,—the thralldom of the soul. Let us think upon the long long years of gradual martyrdom ; the wasting of the health, the languid sickening of the mind, the chronic heart-break (if I may so speak) which make up the measure of her destiny ; that killing *à coup d'épingles*, which is the most insupportable, because the most lasting, of torments. Let us suppose that there was one ray of morn-

ing sunshine before the clouding over of that troubled and gloomy day. Let us suppose that *she loved*; that she loved as the heart loves in youth, as women love at all times; that that young and beautiful affection was slaughtered on the shrine of wealth or worldly aggrandizement; that the oath which she swore at God's altar was an instant perjury—for what the lips spoke, the heart belied; then let us think of the succeeding time; the contest between affection and cold duty; the struggles of concealment; the sick sob of despair rising to her throat; the suppressed tears of agony aching in her brain!

Alas! alas! how many, how very many, there are who might recognize their portraits, *here!* Surrounded, probably, by all the attributes of wealth, they look bright in the sunlight of the world; and those who



judge by that light alone, think all is as it seems to be. But this beauty of outward radiance is but as the bloom upon a consumptive cheek; it is the effect, and, to the observant eye, the token, of the disease within. And what is Retrospection to such a woman as this? The look which she casts upon past time is like that which the Rich Man raised to Lazarus; it is that of the damned looking upon blessedness. Would *not this* woman drink of Lethe?

I am well aware that if the idea of sudden and complete forgetfulness be taken in its rigid sense, it would reduce us to a state of ignorance, bordering on imbecility: we should be like the new-born infant, without speech; without, indeed, any of those matters of common and every-day knowledge which seem to us natural rather than acquired. Perhaps, I should say that they seem to us more in the

light of powers than remembrances: and, when I speak of sudden oblivion passing over the mind, I would except *these* from its operations. It is what we have suffered, and still more what we have done, that it would lighten our hearts to have removed. The deeds that are gathered up against us by accusing time, and which flash across the memory like strokes of fire; these, and the contrast between them and the days of early sinlessness; between what is and what was; the record of these is the "writing on the wall," which Lethe exists not to wash away.

When a man has lived much in the world, and as the world lives; when the stamp of his fresh feelings, like the impress upon coin, has been worn away by collision; when his passions have been indulged, and he has tasted the bitter fruit which springs from such sweet blossom; if any thing

occur to bring before the memory of such a man the scenes of his early age,—what are his feelings then? Nothing can be truer than that all the pageants and indulgences of voluptuous and worldly life; all the conventional and factitious ideas and feelings which it engenders, vanish totally and at once before one touch of real nature. But the effect is pain, cutting pain. The heart swells, and tears gush from the eyes, but they are tears of bitterness. The fallen and stained man recollects the innocent child; the soul which needs the drams of social excitation, looks back to its former healthful and gladsome state, and the simple food on which it lived; the spirit has, like the raven, abandoned the ark, to feed upon foulness and pollution. What would not that man give to have washed from his remembrance the past good, the present evil?

I have always considered "The Pleasures of Memory" to be the most complete misnomer of the beautiful and very feeling poem which is so entitled. All the images which the poet crowds together on revisiting the place of his birth, are surely any thing rather than of pleasure :

" Up springs, at every step, to claim a tear,  
Some little friendship formed, and cherished  
here !"

And is the blight of early friendships to be classed among the *pleasures* of our mind ? Is the recollection of the gush of full and fond abandonment with which one young heart meets another, now checked and dried up for ever ; is the demolition of that fabric of affection, which we thought founded on a rock, but which the waves of time and of worldliness, proved to be on shifting sand ; are these things *pleasures* ?

How does the poet try to shew the justice of his title; how does he attempt to prove that "Memory" is indeed "blessed," that she is in truth an "ethereal power?" He revisits the house in which he was born. He finds the "court grass-grown," the "gateway mouldering," the mansion desolate! The hall, the scene of merry-hearted revelry, and of all those offices of hospitality and kindness, which are common to an English manor-house, is

"Now stained with dews, with cobwebs darkly  
hung."

Every thing throughout the house, which speaks to remembrance and affection, is sinking into decay; the garden is a desert, the very clock has ceased to count the hours now growing so sad, so saddening. All the loved friends, who peopled this loved scene, have passed away, like its prosperous days,

—all is solitude, silence, ruin. And we are told that these things are pleasures, that we are to bless the faculty by which we are enabled to *enjoy* them !

I have been particularly led into this train of thought by a circumstance which occurred to me a few days ago. Looking over the contents of an old chest, I lighted upon some of my school-books, which had lain there neglected, probably almost ever since I left school. They were covered with all the marks and fingerings which such books usually display ; nondescript figures, dates, and scraps of Latin—

“ Hic liber est meus,  
Testis est Deus ;  
Quis eum furatur  
Per collum pendatur ;”—

and other similar effusions of traditionary

school-wit. In a Phædrus, I found in the margin my initials and these words, "Last lesson, July 14th." This had been written, as the date shewed me, just as I was about to go home for the midsummer holidays, after the first half-year I had been at school. A crowd of the impressions of that time rose upon me;—but I was to have them brought before me much more vividly still. In turning over the leaves of the book, I found a folded paper, which, when I opened it, proved to be a letter from my mother, wrapped up in the draft of my answer, or, as we used to call it at school, "the foul copy." The paper and the ink were both discoloured by time, but the writing was perfectly legible. The letter had been written about a fortnight before the beginning of the holidays, and was full of anticipations of pleasure on my return home

after my first absence from it, and chalked out many plans of amusement for me on my arrival. It gave me tidings of my sisters, of my garden, of my pigeons, of my poney, of the favourite groom;—and was written in a large clear hand, that I might read it more readily than the fine, sloping, dashing, writing of a lady would have permitted to so young a child. I turned to my answer. It was written on lines, which had all the appearance of being ruled by myself, as they were far less horizontal than oblique; and the hand was that of a boy of nine years old, when he has not the writing-master at his shoulder. I managed, however, to decypher it. It was on the same topics as my mother's, and written evidently under that intoxication of spirits, in which a school-boy always is for about a month before the holidays. Those who recollect their feelings



on "going home," during their school-day time—still more their *first* going home—and still more yet, those who remember their mother's feelings then, may well figure to themselves these two letters.

My young heart was thus, as it were, laid bare before me. When we look back through the mist of years, our view of what really was, is but very faint and imperfect. But here, every feeling was shewn to me in all the freshness of contemporary time—in all the reality of its actual expression.

My throat felt tightened and choked, till a gush of irrepressible tears relieved me. And what tears were those! I hope my worst enemy may never be cursed by shedding such. I looked upon the record of my childish thoughts; how buoyant was their spirit! how sinless were their anticipations! They were breathed, too, to a mother for

whom my love was something more than filial. To all the deep and holy feelings of that affection, was added one of fond fellowship, which the gay and cordial kindness of my mother's manners towards her children inspired. That mother, alas ! I lost not long after the time of which I speak ; and this I look upon to be one of the heaviest misfortunes which can befall any man. For, if there be any thing which can restrain the ebullitions of hot youth, which can keep the steps of a wayward and impetuous mind in the straight path, it is the influence of a mother. I do not speak of that direct guidance, which, especially in these days, it is almost impossible should exist ; but if the mother be a woman of the heart and mind which mine was, the smallest spark of good feeling in the son will actuate and restrain him. Nothing can more strongly

propel towards good, nothing can be a more powerful inducement to eschew evil, than the reflection that, by the course which we shall follow, we shall give either gladness, or sorrow and deep shame to our mother's heart.—Oh, God ! how bitterly did the contrast between that time and this strike upon what is left to me of a heart, as I looked upon those memorials of my youthful self ! I was then happy in all the bright-heartedness of sunny infancy ; innocent in all the purity of that passionless age ; and now !——

If the waters of oblivion had been offered to me at that moment, I would have drained the cup to its last drop, even though, as in the Eastern story, Death had been mingled in the draught !

## EXTRACT XVI.

“ On n’entend rien à vos femmes de Paris !”

Jour.

[From the Diary.]

London, December, 1795.

I WAS turning the corner, the other day, from Conduit-street into Swallow-street, when I ran against a person, not particularly well-dressed, whose face, when I turned to apologize, I was confident I had seen before, and yet to which I could not, at once, assign an owner. He knew me, however, more readily; for, with a sudden exclamation of “ Comment, M. Blount? c’est vous !” he gave me a hearty English shake with both hands, which manifestly would have been a

French accolade, had not the difference of the *locale* impressed upon my friend the recollection of our insular customs. With some effort I now recalled to my memory a certain Baron de Corvillac, whom I knew at Paris five or six years ago, and whose wife gave the pleasantest ‘petits soupers,’ even in that scene and age of that most agreeable species of society. I easily guessed that the Baron was an emigrant; and, from his decayed appearance, surmised that he was as circumscribed in his means as so many of his countrymen who have taken the same step. His gaiety and vivacity, however, had by no means forsaken him. He seemed as lively and buoyant as he used to be when he inhabited one of the finest hotels in Paris, and when he had every thing at his beck which wealth and fashion could command. I found that he had saved absolutely nothing out of

the wreck of the Revolution ;—nay that, on the contrary, he had had great difficulty in escaping with his life. He now, he told me, gained his bread as a teacher of French—in which pursuit he met with two impediments : the first was his extremely slender proficiency in every language *but* French ; the second, the market being extravagantly overstocked, by the number of his countrymen in precisely the same position. I inquired after Madame la Baronne. He said she was quite well, and would be most happy to see me any day I could make it convenient to call at No. — Carnaby-street, Golden-square. I promised to do so shortly ; and, shaking hands again, we parted.

I cannot say that, as a genus, I admire the emigrants ; because I never could discover upon what political principle they

grounded and justified their leaving their country as they did. Whatever their opinions might be, whether royalist or revolutionary, it has always appeared to me that in either case they were peremptorily called upon to remain, at the very moment that they came away. I have, therefore, never been able to account for a step so general as the Emigration undoubtedly was, except upon that principle of self-love, which certainly was the predominant characteristic of French society when I knew it in the last days of the old *regime*. But, whatever may be my general impressions on this subject, I trust I never have been very rigid in applying them to any individual cases, I have met with, of former acquaintances in exile and difficulty; still less was I inclined to do so in the case of the Baron, of whose hospitality and extreme

good nature I retained so strong a recollection. I went yesterday, accordingly, to call upon him and his wife.

I remember Madame de Corvillac one of the most brilliant women in Paris. Her house was the rendezvous of every thing that was most agreeable and eminent in every line of distinction; and the evenings I passed there are among the best of my recollections of my travels. I was thrown into a society which, probably, I could have met nowhere else. Ministers of state, ambassadors, men of letters, men of wit and of the world, distinguished for their conversational talents—all congregated at her suppers; and, dissipated as I then was, I was still well able to appreciate and enjoy the advantages of such society. For Madame de Corvillac herself, she was like many other Frenchwomen of her rank and date—lively, animated, agree-



able,—with a mind cultivated by intellectual intercourse, and polished by constant mingling with the best company in Europe. She had wit enough to call forth the wit of those who had more than herself, and acquirement enough to taste whatever might arise in consequence. For the rest, she was rather handsome, and exceedingly well-dressed; and there was always some one who, in the easy and unquestioned intercourse then prevalent in Paris, had the reputation of being well with her, though without scandal, or any breach of the *bienséances*.

I had some speculation with myself as to how a person coming from the very hot-bed of so factitious a state of society, would appear in a mean lodging in a back street in London. I figured her to myself, by turns, as grown peevish and slatternly,—or *dévoté*,—or sickly and sinking under adversity; but

in each and all of my suppositions I was wrong;—the truth was, certainly, the last hypothesis which would have occurred to me.

On knocking at the door of a house corresponding with the meanness of its situation, and inquiring for M. de Corvillac, I was told he was out,—but to Madame I was admitted. I first sent up my card, lest she should not recognize me, and I should have the awkwardness of making myself known. On being desired to walk up, I ascended a narrow, dark, and somewhat dirty, staircase, to a second floor, which I expected to find in conformity with the approach to it. But, no such thing. The room into which I was shewn was, certainly, not very much crowded with furniture; but what there was was neat of its kind, and scrupulously clean. A cheerful fire shone in the grate; and, above all, the tokens of *habitation*, and habitation

by women, were numerous and pleasing. I do not know whether this word would be readily understood; but it would be difficult to explain all that I mean to convey by the term. Books, music, and other evidences of elegant accomplishment, are included in the expression;—but, to fill up the outline, the items are so many, so indefinite, and so indescribable, that I feel it necessary to convey them by some generic phrase; and none better than the above occurs to me at this moment.

These observations were not all made at the first *coup-d'œil*, for the living figures in the scene naturally attracted my first attention. Madame de Corvillac herself was seated at a small table, drawing—or, at least, with the implements of drawing before her, which she had only just laid down. She was dressed, simply and becomingly, in the Eng-

lish fashion ; though, perhaps, the “coëffure” betrayed some lingering tokens of the Parisian “petite-maitresse.” Her daughter, a girl of about eleven years old, was occupied in needle-work. Madame de C. rose to receive me with all her former grace of manner, perhaps softened and made warmer by the recollection of the change of our relative positions, and, still more, of how few among her English friends had remembered the wealthy woman of fashion in the penniless refugee.

A few minutes placed us on a footing of perfect ease and unreserve. With all the volubility of her sex and her nation, she gave me the whole history of their emigration, and of their adventures, since, in England. It appeared that, while the Baron was out giving lessons, this soft and delicate woman, reared in the lap of profusion and lux-

ury, performed, assisted by her daughter, all the menial offices of their little *ménage*—conducted the education of that daughter—added her quota to their moderate means by the exercise of her talents in drawing, which as an amateur had been reckoned extreme, and which really were very pleasing—and, occasionally, after a day thus spent, went out in the evening to give lessons in music !

Nor was this at all recited to me for *effect*, or praise. It came out in the course of conversation, and as the conclusion to her little story of adventure. Nay, she seemed to think she was scarcely to be pitied, in comparison with some of her friends, who, as she said, “could not get employment if they were equal to it, and whose health and strength would not permit them to avail themselves of it, if it were to offer.”

I have seen this woman in the midst of

gaiety and splendour—and surrounded by a circle the most brilliant which it is possible to meet gathered together, ornamented by dress and blazing with jewels, and yet (though Heaven knows I am no sentimentalist) I never thought she looked so well as she did yesterday, in her simple dress and humble dwelling, with the flush of honest feeling upon her face, as she warmed in the recital of the misfortunes of her compatriots and of herself. Here was a woman upon whom the air had never been suffered to blow rudely, whose sole occupation had been to invent fresh sources of amusement and gratification, and who had literally been clothed in the softest, and had fared of the richest, which art, industry, and wealth could furnish—here was this woman in privation, if not poverty, working with her own hands in those labours, which formerly she scarce-

ly knew existed, and dedicating the embellishments of her past life to lessening the present wants of her family and of herself.

I will confess that one of the things which surprised me the most in all this, was the evidently strong motive of action which arose from affection towards her husband. Not only she did all this, but she did it with a cheerfulness which was beautiful, both in itself, and in throwing the severity of her tasks into shade ;—and, moreover, she spoke of him, and of his conduct since they had fallen into evil fortune, with a warmth and energy which at once bespoke the truth and the intensity of the feelings from which those expressions sprang. There never had been, it is true, any thing publicly improper in her conduct ; but neither had she and the Baron been apparently one whit more

attached to each other than was the general usage of the society around them—I need not say how little that was. Nay, more; Madame de Corvillac was very much belied if she did not take still further advantage of the lax arrangements of the times in which she lived. Of this I had personally no accurate knowledge; but such was certainly, true or false, the current rumour in Paris. This apparent contradiction, if not quite solved, was, at any rate, in some degree, explained, by the recollection which occurred to me, as she finished speaking, of the similar surprise which Babouc feels at a lady of Persepolis, with whose *cavalier servente* he was acquainted, pleading her husband's cause with the minister most warmly. “ ‘ Est-il possible, madame,’ lui dit-il, ‘ que vous vous soyez donné tant de peine pour un homme que vous n’aimez point, et



dont vous avez tout à craindre ?"—‘ Un homme que je n’aime point ?’ s’écrie-t-elle : ‘ sachez que mon mari est le meilleur ami que j’aie au monde, qu’il n’y a rien que je ne lui sacrifie, hors mon amant ; et qu’il ferait tout pour moi, hors quitter sa maîtresse.’”\* The substance of this passage occurred to my mind yesterday ; and, on turning to my Voltaire, I find I remembered it correctly.

There is no disputing such authority, certainly ; but I cannot but think that, in this case, and in the many similar ones which I believe the revolution has called forth, there has mingled a far nobler, as well as stronger, motive of action, with the factitious and paradoxical sentiment above related. Such a sentiment, indeed, could exist only in a most artificial state of society,

\* *Le Monde comme il va ; Vision de Babouc.*

which is a corroboration of the justice of my thinking that it has been common misfortune—the being thrown, together and at once, upon their own natural resources—which has called forth so many noble and self-sacrificing traits, from those whom we were accustomed to consider the most frivolous of human beings. Nay, more ; they have shewn, as in the present instance, a self-devotion to *long endurance*, far, far more trying than the extremest sacrifice, or act, which would need only one moment of heroism to endure or to perform. Madame de Corvillac's living in a garret in London, and working mentally and bodily for the support of her husband and child, appears to me to be almost as unexpectedly noble as even Madame Du-Barri's sacrificing her own life to save that of her

friend, during the reign of Terror.\* Yet it is difficult to say; for the actual sacrifice of life, where the choice is in our own power, is undoubtedly one of the greatest and noblest efforts of poor humanity.

Madame de Corvillac still retains those charms of conversation for which she was always remarkable. Nay, they appeared to me to be even increased—partly, it is probable, from the higher interest and importance of the subjects on which she spoke, familiarly, and as one who had borne a part in them, to what could appertain to the customary trifling occupations of idle people

\* It is said that when Madame Du-Barri was confined, previously to her execution, the means of assured escape were offered to her. Her friend, Madame de Mortemart, was in the same circumstances as herself. Madame Du-Barri asked if the plan could be made to include two. She was told it was impossible. On this, she irrevocably insisted on being left to her fate; while her friend escaped in her room, and arrived safely in England.

of quality in a luxurious capital. Her character and mind seemed altogether exalted and ennobled by the adversity she had suffered, and the manner in which she had struggled against it. She spoke jestingly of the contrast between their present and their former condition. Secure of the undeniable height of her former state, she seemed to feel no false shame for their present penury—brought on, as it had been, by being included in a general calamity, arising from a great national convulsion; not by their own extravagance or bad conduct.

I looked at the drawing which lay before her, and of which she was making a copy. It represented a French château, surrounded by a garden, full of the terraces, statues, and parterres, usual in the old school of gardening in that country. The prospect,

however, was varied and improved by a distant view of a rich valley, with beautiful hills beyond it, and a fine stream running through its whole length. “Ah!” she said with a sigh, “that is a view of Vombières! I don’t know whether you were ever there, M. Blount; but always in the beginning of September, our whole set used to be *réuni* there; and commonly passed a few weeks with us before we went back to Paris. ‘Mais ces jours de fête sont passés!’ I shall never see dear dear Vombières again. I only hope my poor pensioners may have kind masters.”

The tears gathered in her eyes as she spoke,—for the first time during the whole recital she had made to me of her sufferings and hardships. “There is Adelaide,” she continued, pointing to her daughter, “who regrets Vombières, and all the *bons paysans*

round it, even more than I do. Young persons, M. Blount, do not become attached to the pleasures and the society of the capital so much as we do. They delight in the simplicity of the country and of country life. It is hard to tear young affections from even inanimate objects. There was a flower-garden, with a fountain, and an arbour of early lilacs, which had always been appropriated to Adelaide; and I do think it cost her almost as much to leave that, as all the rest of France put together. Little Babet, too, her foster-sister—who lent her *sabots* for our disguise in our escape—I almost thought we must have brought the girl with us, it was so difficult to part them. But it was impossible.” I looked towards her daughter, as Madame de C. spake. I could not, however, see her face; for she held it bent over her work. But I perceived a large tear fall

upon her hand, and I turned away my eyes for fear of jarring feelings which I could not but respect and admire.

I came away from my visit, deeply touched both with sympathy and admiration. It was a noble and a moving spectacle to witness these delicate and luxurious persons meeting their hard fate with so much firmness and energy of mind. I had heard, that such things existed in this country, among others similarly situated; but they had never chanced to fall so immediately under my own observation before. What I have seen has contributed to raise both the individuals, and the class to which they belong, higher in my estimation than they ever stood during the season of their brilliancy, wealth, and splendour. The rubs of hard fortune have given to view the latent merits of which the capability was in them.

## EXTRACT XVII.

“ Yes, it was love ! unchangeable—unchanged—

\* \* \* \* \*

Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,

And yet—Oh, more than all !—untired by time !”

BYRON.

[From Antonia ; translated from the Italian.]

Pisa, November, 1796.

It is with emotions of no ordinary kind that I take up my pen to address you once more. I had thought that all communication had ceased between us for ever ; but circumstances of a nature, indeed, impossible to be foreseen, induce me, even at this distance of time, to renew it. ‘ Distance of time ?’—Alas, there is no such thing as time to a sentiment



like that which has bound me to you through life !

You will certainly have heard, and no doubt with interest, of the political convulsions which have recently agitated our country. The irruption of the French has put an end to our existing government, and introduced vast changes with the new dynasty. Among these is the dissolution of a great majority of the religious houses ; and thus, after so many years, I am once more free ! An attempt was, at first, made to impress upon us, individually, the binding nature of our vows ; but the increasing difficulties of re-uniting our communities, even by stealth, have, at last, procured for those who choose to demand it, a formal release from their vows, to ease the consciences of such as were thrown upon the world, but still considered themselves to be sworn to seclusion.

I have claimed, and received this dispensation. I never, from the first, felt my mind and heart go along with my profession; and certain recollections, which, perhaps, have increased of late years, kept me in a state of continual internal contention, equally harassing and hopeless. To taste of peace in the state to which I was doomed, needed a calmer heart, and less agitated passions than I had been able to bring with me to my convent walls. I embraced, therefore, gladly this most unexpected opportunity of being freed from the ties of conscience which bound me: they bind me no longer. On the first dissolution of our community, I sought the protection of an aunt who resides in this place; and with her I still am.

Having said thus much, to explain to you the change which has taken place in my situation, I will now proceed to those topics

which, in truth, are my chief motive in writing to you. Once the bars which rendered our intercourse sinful are removed, I am naturally eager to ask of your happiness and well-being; and to be the first to give you the foregoing information concerning myself. But I will go farther; and that with a frankness which may be at variance with female forms and habits; but I have been too long secluded from the world to have much knowledge or care of the minutiae of its ceremonials; and to *you*, it would be doing both of us injustice, not to speak with the most implicit openness. I am no longer the young girl I was when we first met; when maidenly diffidence drives from the lips the expressions which maidenly love sends thither. Several years—years of loneliness and meditation—have passed over my head since then; and it would be only affectation to pretend, that

my ideas have now exactly the same colouring as they had at that time.

I desire, Philip, that we should meet once more. The letter I received from you when you were here, has been the food on which my heart has lived ever since; and, perhaps, from the unity and exclusiveness of this object of feeling, I may have been led too much to overlook the lapse of time which has taken place since that letter was written. You may have formed ties in your own country, to which your position in society would naturally lead; which I was on the point of entreating you to do, when I wrote to you what I considered my last farewell: but my pen refused to trace upon paper that which, after all, I could not bring my too womanly heart to wish; but which is not the less likely to have been realized, notwithstanding. In that case, I have only to request, that you

will tell me so as speedily as possible. Do not be afraid of hurting my feelings by so doing ; for, separated as we were, I am not so extravagant as to suppose, you would consider yourself for ever bound to me. No ! I shall not upbraid you, even in thought ;—but I shall then deem it prudent, that we should *not* meet. On every account, it would be impossible.

If you still are free, I will come to set up the staff of my rest in England. But, mark me, and believe me,—I do not purpose, by so doing, even to recall to your remembrance the tenour of your last letter to me. I feel confident you consider me above dissimulation : if I thought that you would view my conduct in this light, it would prevent our ever meeting at all. But, I am convinced, you are too generous to do so. My wish is to enjoy the society of the only human being

who ever filled my heart—and who filled it so completely as even to exclude images and thoughts to which *nothing* human ought ever to be an impediment.

For the rest, many years have I passed since we met—twice the number since you saw me, than since I saw you. You will, probably, have retained the recollection of the young, buoyant, enthusiastic girl, whom you knew at Tours, upwards of eight years ago ; you will see a woman saddened and prematurely aged, whose frame has been wasted, and whose mind has been made despondent, by the perpetual conflict between passion and duty, and the nearly-balanced strength of the severe struggle. Continue to bear this in mind ; and recollect that the Antonia of to-day is the Antonia of the days “ of the Loire,” only in her unvaried, unvarying, all-engrossing affection for you !

I need not fear long delay in receiving an answer to this letter ; and I will not pretend to disguise the anxiety with which I shall ascertain its purport. \* \* \* \*

[Mr. Blount's Answer.†]

London, January, 1797.

Your letter, dearest Antonia, has not only given me the strongest delight in itself, but has also relieved me from much uneasiness with regard to your fate. Imperfect and interrupted as our intercourse with Italy now is, I had not been able to ascertain whether your convent was among the number of those reformed, till you yourself gave me the information.

I am rejoiced, for your own sake, at your being released from a course of life so uncongenial to your warm and excellent

† The original of this letter also is in Italian.

heart, and active feelings. For myself, I shall not attempt to describe the joy with which it has flooded my whole soul. It may be comprised in three words—I am still free from any ties which can oppose our union. Come, beloved of my youth—come, my wife!—for such, from hence, you are! Yes, dearest,—the sufferings of years will now be repaid, they will henceforth be only the gloomy days to which we shall look back, as to a contrast to the brightness of our present fate! The dreams of our early days will be realized now. On my bosom, you will find repose after the agitations of the life which has passed; on your's, I shall find solace, and purity, and peace, after the storms of my tempestuous youth.

Antonia, I will not deceive you; whatever have been my wrongs towards you, deceit never was among them; and it shall not be so



now. I always spoke the truth to you, in former days ; perhaps sometimes to the detriment of my suit with you—I will not now cease to do so. Years have passed since we parted ; and I do not pretend that, during those years, I have not sometimes spoken to women in the language of love. Man is a being of attributes and faculties so much less delicately cast than those of woman, that that which, in her, would be final—aye, and degrading—dereliction ; in him is only a passing cloud, an effaceable stain, which the remembrance of her he really loves can carry off, and obliterate. That which it would cut me to the heart's core to think that you had done, I confess frankly that I have done myself. I have allowed the fantasy of the moment to lead me to others ; but you, Antonia, you have always been seated at the bottom of my heart. In the wildest moments of dissipa-

tion, in the most intoxicating spells of woman's witchery, your image has risen before me, and shot a pang across my heart for its alienation.

To you, who are the most delicate of created beings, I almost shrink from thus exposing the weaknesses and foul places of my heart. But I am determined that you shall know me as I am, and not merely through the coloured medium which youthful affection has held before your eyes when turned towards me. I never will throw false glosses over my feelings—if I had meant or endeavoured to do so, I should have been wholly silent on the subjects of which I have just spoken. But I have confessed my fickleness—I must now assert my truth. Antonia, you are the only woman I ever truly loved ;—throughout all my follies and my faults, I ever have loved you ;—and *I love you still*, with all the fer-

vency of my youthful passion—with all the accumulated strength and intensity of years ! I feel that it was from you my life was destined to take its colour—that my love for you was fated to be *the* passion of my existence ; I feel that my hopes of future happiness are inseparably interwoven with your's.

Such, if a window were in my breast, you would see was the state of my heart concerning you. I have fairly set all before you—if to this you can entrust your future destiny, my arms and my affections are open to welcome and to foster you—my home awaits to greet you as my bride. With you, indeed, that home, of late so lonely and desolate, in which Regret and Discontent were fast obtaining so firm a footing—that home will be to me a scene of happiness such as I have little deserved to experience—of happiness, the truest, the *only* true on earth—domestic hap-

piness. At length, Antonia, after what seemed to be an immoveable obstacle, you will be mine ! Can it, indeed, be that such fortune is in store for me ?

## EXTRACT XVIII.

“ When I said I should die a bachelor, I did not think I should live to be married.”

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Dodderidge, March, 1797.

I HAVE just received a letter, my dear Fre-win, to inform me that Antonia is actually on her way to this country ; nay, that I may expect her within a fortnight from this time. This relieves me from much anxiety ; for, in despite of the French, I was almost wishing I had gone for her myself ; though, to be sure, it might have exposed us to all manner of delays as well as dangers. She is coming, too, in the most convenient of all possible ways—in a merchant-ship from Leghorn ;—

so that I shall meet her at Portsmouth, or Deal, immediately on her landing; and she will be exposed to no trouble, anxiety, or inconvenience whatever.

I cannot say how deeply I feel touched as well as obliged by Lady Katharine's most friendly offer of receiving Antonia till our marriage can take place. I accept her proffer with all the gratitude which such kindness must call forth. From where, indeed, can I so fitly receive my bride, as from the family of my old, my tried, my excellent friend? You must give her away, Frewin. Besides this, I fully feel the advantage of my poor nun experiencing, at her first coming to this country, the advantage of being under the protection of a person like Lady Katharine. No wonder you are a good husband, when you have such a good wife to make you so.

I am here turning my bachelor-house out

at windows, to make it in some measure fit to bring my wife to. Her boudoir, I do flatter myself, will be a *bijou*; she is, as I believe I have told you, an admirable musician;—and there is the snuggest recess for the piano-forte, which looks as if it was made for it; though, Heaven help me! my revered progenitor, who built the room, probably never knew of the existence of any instrument beyond a drum or a hunting-horn. I have got an excellent harp for her also, which is her favourite instrument;—and the pictures, books, &c. really complete the room, so as to render, I think, the casket almost worthy of the jewel;—I cannot give it a higher praise. A view of a certain scene near Bologna hangs on one side the fire-place, and an empty frame, as a pendant, on the other—destined, when this endless war will let one get to the spot, to receive a still more favourite landscape in

the vicinity of Tours, of which you may, perhaps, have heard. Why do I pester you with these follies of a lover?—why, simply, because I think you will bear with me, while in this intoxication of spirits;—and, whether you will or no, I have my pen in my hand, and have the option of writing, as you have of reading, according to pleasure.

The conflict of old Ward's feelings is very ludicrous! Good old soul! she is delighted at her master marrying, who, she thought, was growing a confirmed old bachelor;—and thus giving some chance of a continuation of the race which she venerates beyond all others;—but she is somewhat scandalized at the reflection that the bride is a foreigner, and, moreover, a *Papish*, as she chuses to call it. She has already interrogated me as to what dishes should be served on a Friday; and seems to have considerable fear for the ghost-



ly weal of every one in the house, if a priest should be ever allowed to come into it. But her joyous feelings, on the whole, predominate: indeed, I will not allow the expression of any others, in my presence, just now.

I have set three additional gardeners to work, to get my mother's old flower-garden into order. The boudoir opens upon it;—and I am determined that, in her first English summer, Antonia shall find no lack of roses, even so far north of the Alps. I have lived here so little lately, that I have an infinity to do; but I have worked in every sense *con amore*, and have pretty nearly got to the end of my task. I shall be in town next week, when I shall come and thank Lady Katharine in person: till then, good bye.

P. B.

[From the Diary.]

Dodderidge, March, 1797.

I CAN scarcely think it real, after all, that I am making ready for my marriage, and that marriage with Antonia! 'Faith I did not deserve to be thus rescued from the slough of Despond, into which my old regrets on that score were so fast sinking me. I ought to have married her eight years ago. How much better it would have been for both of us, if I had! She would have brought an unbroken and undoubting spirit to our common stock;—and I a heart with so much less of the corruption of the world to spoil it. And why did I not marry her? That question seems to be more and more inexplicable, every time I put it to myself;—and that, I think, on a moderate computation, has been three times a-day for almost the last five

years. There was nothing to hinder me—I had only to speak the word ;—but truly, the young gentleman valued “ his liberty,” and would not. The consequence of which has been almost breaking her heart, and completely wasting and deteriorating my own. Still, with regard to her, it is not effete,—when I think of her it burns “ with all its wonted fires ;”—and the ‘ knoll over the Loire ’ rises to my mind, just as it was of yore.

She is changed, I doubt not ;—but for that I do not care a button. The bloom of her beauty may be gone : but its grace and charm must remain with her for ever ; and these are more than ample. We are yet young, both of us : we have, in all human likelihood, many years before us : after the storms of our youth, they will be years of happiness and peace.

Yes ! Antonia shall taste the delights of

an English home. She shall see that there is nothing on this globe to compare with it. I have been much abroad; and I liked the Continent, as a young and gay man, exceedingly: but, for the affections and charities of domestic life, there is no place I have yet seen like an English fire-side. The roughness of our fathers' days is past, and our country-houses are no longer reproachable with mere boorishness and debauchery. But with one so mild, so cultivated, so amiable, as Antonia,—one whose delicacies and elegancies of mind are equal to the strength and warmth of her affections, my home will indeed be blessed! I scarcely deserve such happiness as this; but it would truly be my own fault, if I did any thing to forfeit it, when once it is in my possession.

I almost smile at myself when I reflect upon the eagerness with which I look for-

ward to our being settled here together. After all the wildnesses of my youth, I shall become a more uxorious husband at last. I shall belie even the modified definition of a boudoir—"Un appartement charmant, où l'on va pour être seule, mais où l'on ne boude point."—No ! here shall I hang enraptured on the tones of that voice which first struck upon my heart ; here shall we gaze together upon the resemblance of her Italian home, and (soon I hope) upon that of the spot where we first confessed to one another our affection. Here, too, I shall instruct her in my language ; and make her taste the strength and richness of our old poets, as she used to delight in setting before me the grace, and delicacy, and harmony of those of her own country. Oh ! what a summer of happiness this will be ! How far—how immeasurably superior to the loose and dis-

sipated life I have led for so many years. Ah ! I wish I could sponge them from the calendar ! But it is no use looking back thus : I can look forward with joy and hope—which is more than I have been able to do for many a long day ; so I ought to be content with that.

## EXTRACT XIX.

“ ————— A brave vessel

. . . . .  
Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock

Against my very heart ! Poor souls ! they perish'd.

THE TEMPEST.

[Letter from Mr. Frewin to Lady Katharine  
Frewin.]

Hastings, March, 1797.

MY DEAR KATHARINE,—

THE rumour was, alas ! but too true ! The ship is totally lost, and every soul on board has perished, with the exception of one sailor and an Italian lad, a passenger ! When I arrived here, the day before yesterday, I found Blount in a state little short of

distraction; for the identity of the vessel had not then been ascertained; and uncertainty was, therefore, added to his racking agitation. The moment I arrived, we set off together to the place where the fragments of the wreck were being cast upon the beach; for the ship had already entirely gone to pieces, and it was now only in planks and in small morsels that it reached the shore.

Shortly after we got to the spot, the tide turned; and the things thrown up by the sea became less and less frequent. We therefore returned to the town, to inquire if any certain tidings had yet been received. We found that a man belonging to the wrecked vessel, and a boy who had been servant to a passenger, had come safe to land. It was, indeed, the vessel on board which the unfortunate Antonia was coming to England.



She, as well as every other soul on board, with the above exceptions, had perished !

The effect of this intelligence upon Blount was such as I should in vain attempt to describe to you ; and which I would not distress you by doing if I could. I am rejoiced that I came down at the moment I did ; for I do not know to what extremities his frantic sorrow would have driven him, had I not been here to keep him under some controul. It was with the greatest difficulty that we withheld him from rushing to the shore to seek Antonia's body. By ' we,' I mean myself and Eustache, his servant, who has lived with him for upwards of ten years. The feeling and delicate behaviour of this man has, I had almost said, endeared him to me for life. Certainly I shall always esteem him most highly.

At last, the violence of Blount's feelings

had their natural result. He fell into a heavy sleep, or rather a kind of torpor, from sheer exhaustion. I left him under the charge of Eustache, and went out to question the people who had been saved. The sailor gave me a distinct account of the loss of the vessel. It appeared she had encountered the dreadful gale of the 21st, when considerably farther down channel; and, after every species of suffering and disaster, had finally been driven on shore, near to the spot whither I had already been. She struck so strongly, and the force of the sea was so great, that she went to pieces in ten minutes after she took the ground. It was on a sand-bank, at only about three quarters of a mile from the shore; but the sea was so tremendous that no swimmer could make head against it, and the tide was ebbing!—Another cause of the great loss of life in this

unhappy vessel was, that the only boat they had left was swamped, and stove in pieces, full of people, against the ship's side—partly from the violence of the sea, and partly from the eagerness of the crew to rush into her. Every soul who was in this boat perished, with the exception of the Italian lad whom I have mentioned, who contrived to get upon a hen-coop which was floating from the wreck; and after remaining in the water for nearly two hours, he was picked up by the life-boat, which was at last able to venture forth to the assistance—not of the vessel, for of that no vestige remained, but—of such as, like this boy and the man, who had seized a spar, might still be floating on the surface.

The Italian was able to give me some information concerning the person who mainly excited my interest. Antonia, he told me,

was in the boat, and he was close to her at the moment it was swamped. There could be, alas ! no doubt of her identity. The name and description tallied too accurately to leave any hope of this kind. But if any had existed, it would have been removed by the body being washed on shore yesterday afternoon, about a mile and a-half from the place where the ship went down. On the news being brought to me, I immediately sent Eustache, who had seen Antonia abroad some years ago, to identify the body ; and, if it really was that which we sought, to have it brought hither at once. He returned in a couple of hours with the corpse !

I went to look upon all that remained of one concerning whom I had so long taken interest, from the manner in which she had been able to engross the mind of such a man as Blount. The body was but slightly disfi-

gured by the sea-water, and, as I gazed upon it, I could easily trace that beauty of which B. had so often spoken in rapture. She had evidently undergone care and sorrow; and her skin was now, of course, deadly pale—but the form of the features was exquisite; and the hair which fell around her face was of a beauty most remarkable. One sleeve of her dress had been torn, and was now raised high up the arm. I thought I perceived, just above it, something glitter like gold; and, on raising the sleeve more completely, I perceived an oval golden locket, fastened to her arm, between the shoulder and the elbow, by a chain riveted round it. After considerable difficulty in finding the spring, I at last opened it, and found it to contain a small miniature of Blount, beautifully executed, taken when he must have been about three-and-twenty, and set

in a slender braid of hair and diamonds. I conclude this must have been given to her by him at the first period of their acquaintance, and that she wore it thus concealed, and covered with a plate of gold, either that it might be unknown in the convent—or that, if it were discovered, she might assign to it contents of some different nature.

Towards the close of the evening, I informed Blount that the body had been found ; for I saw that his agitation concerning its fate was so extreme, that he never would have attained any calm till the worst was encountered and over. He insisted upon seeing her ;—I endeavoured, as strenuously as I could, to dissuade him from it, but I found it impossible to do so.

I shall not shock your feelings by attempting to depict his emotions at the sight. You can, indeed, readily figure to your-

self what they must have been. Here was the beloved of his youth, whom he had been awaiting as his bride, after so many years of hopeless separation, now restored to him at last—a corpse! He discovered the picture as I had done—he determined that it should not be separated from her.

I had been in hopes, when I yielded to his seeing the body, that it might draw tears from him; for, as yet, he had shed none. But no, he gazed upon her, almost as if he was unconscious upon what he looked—his eyes were fixed in despair! I was about to remove him gently from the room, when he sprang from me, and, throwing himself upon his knees by the bed-side, impressed a long kiss upon the clay-cold lips of the corpse. A shudder seemed to thrill through his whole frame; and, on rising, he would have fallen backwards his full

length upon the floor, if I had not caught him in my arms and prevented it. He had fainted.

I had him removed to his own room ; and this morning he is somewhat restored ; but he still insists upon attending the funeral, which is to take place this evening at a Catholic chapel about two miles off. He is very unfit to do so, but I fear I shall not be able to prevent him. Adieu ! You shall hear from me again to-morrow.

[From the same to the same.]

THE unhappy Antonia has been laid in her last home ; and I shall now endeavour to get my friend away from this place as soon as possible. He insisted, as I had anticipated, on attending the burial ; and I was ultimately glad he did so ; for, when the earth



was about to close over her grave for ever, he threw himself upon my shoulder, and wept long and unrestrainedly. You may suppose how gladly I welcomed those tears.

My own eyes, I assure you, were not dry. It was indeed a spectacle which could not fail to draw tears from any one who had human feeling. Poor Eustache sobbed aloud. It was solemn, also, in a high degree. It took place by torch-light; and the red and gloomy light which the torches shed, spread a veil over the meannesses of the humble chapel, and made it appear in unison with the sad scene. When I reflected on the purpose for which this lovely and ill-fated woman had come to England—on the very different ceremony which I had expected to witness in a similar church,—I could not but silently return my grateful thanks to Heaven that my fortune had been so different—that

*you*, Katharine, and our little ones were spared to me, to shed such pure and perfect happiness over my domestic home:—Poor Blount ! he can never know that happiness, now !

## NOTE, BY THE EDITOR.

THE reader will find an interval of nearly three years between the last and the next Extract. I have, therefore, thought it advisable to insert a brief note in this place, to connect what has passed with that which is to come.

Shortly after the catastrophe recorded in Mr. Frewin's letter, Mr. Blount retired to his country place, that he might be uncontrolled in the indulgence of those feelings of bitter grief to which so shocking an event could not fail to give rise. He fell, as I have understood, into an almost apathetic state:—his feelings did not find vent in sudden and violent bursts; but rather seemed chilled to numbness—as the effects of extreme cold upon our physical frame shews itself in sleep and torpor

After a time, however,—for such a state cannot, by possibility, last long,—his wounded state of mind began to display itself in extreme restlessness, and total incapacity of applying to the same thing for any continuance. He had not that well-head within, from which all the fountains of real consolation are supplied. His mind—as may be guessed from his life—was not of a religious habit. Thus, when he suffered under an affliction such as this, he had not that store of inestimable price whereunto to have recourse. In the dearth of happiness and peace within his soul, there was for him no widow's cruse, unexhausted, inexhaustible. He felt, to its full extent, the barrenness of that uncultivated land.

When at this stage of a wounded heart, partly from former habit, and partly from its natural working, Mr. Blount would willingly

have sought diversion to his thoughts in travelling. But at this time the greater part of the Continent was shut against us; and the short tours which our own Island can afford were but a pitiful resource to a man who had been accustomed to wander at will over Europe. He did, however, pass through the routine of some of these. In the summer of 1798, he went through the Highlands; in that of the following year, over the Lakes; but, after each of these, he returned to his solitary home more gloomy, depressed, and miserable than ever. The truth is, that, to a man who has lived in the world, when the first passionate ebullition, and the more fearful torpor, of violent grief, have passed away—(and pass they must, either from the sufferer sinking under them, if he be weakly, or struggling through them, if he be strong)—after that stage is over

there is only one quality which can render solitude soothing, or even bearable, and that, I have already stated, Mr. Blount did not possess;—I mean, a strong sense and cultivation of religion. Without this, from the world he came, and to the world he will assuredly revert.

Accordingly, about two years and a-half after Antonia's death, Mr. Blount appeared again in London; but he came there an altered man. The same craving for excitement existed in him; but he no longer sought to gratify it by the same means. There were several circumstances which conduced to this. The first flow and flush of youth were passed. He had arrived at mature manhood, and he was far elder than his years. When he first was separated from this early object of his love, he had all the glow of young blood within his veins,—he had the evil habit of pursuing, and the exciting one of success,

within his mind ; and though he regretted her deeply, strongly, bitterly, we have seen the means by which he strove to drive away these feelings. He had now lost her again, and irrevocably. What he suffered on that occasion, itself tended to effect upon him the work of Time ; and he was also some years older in point of fact. Besides this, he was, as I have before said, a man of warm and delicate feelings ; and it would scarcely have been consistent with either, if he had now recommenced his former course of life.

Still he needed excitement, and he sought it where it is undoubtedly to be found, but at the price of almost every other good in life. In a word, he acquired the habit of *play*. *This*, certainly, yields excitement, but, good Heavens ! at what cost !

I shall now recommence my extracts from Mr. Blount's own writings.

## EXTRACT XX.

Pleas'd the fresh packs on cloth of green they see,  
And seizing handle with preluding glee ;  
'They draw, they sit, they shuffle, cut and deal,  
Like friends assembled, but like foes to feel.

CRABBE.

[From the Diary.]

London, Dec. 1799.

I LOST a cruel deal of money, last night, at ——'s. Plague take it, this is paying dearly for one's whistle, indeed. I must take care what I am about—for I should never do for a poor man ; and I am not quite, I hope, the sort of person who would



turn rook, after having lost all his feathers as a pigeon. The transition, indeed, is by no means rare:—

“On commence par être dupe,  
On finit par être fripon.”

The history of many a man in this town (I might say, perhaps, with more propriety, *on* this town) is summed up in this distich;—aye, and of men who carry a good face upon it, and are welcome and well received in good society. This, I confess, appears to me to be somewhat an anomaly in our moral code. A woman who lapses from what is considered the point of honour in her sex, is turned, without recall, from out the social pale. A *cordon sanitaire* is drawn round her to prevent the spread of the contagion to the uninfected. But a man who is known to live upon play—“whose car-

riage," as Count Basset has it, "rolls upon the four aces"—whose skill at all games is extreme, and whose luck is, to say the least of it, extraordinary,—such a man, as long as he is not detected in downright (must I use the word?) *cheating*, is rather looked upon as a person of talent and accomplishment to be admired, than as a swindler to be thrown out at the window. But, then, he must play at the best clubs, and fleece the highest, richest, and most fashionable men. Sharpers "in rags" are never to be tolerated. If he be himself a man of good family, so much the better; but, at all events, he must live in a 'good set,' and fly at high game, or he will never get on in this very moral and consistent country. Some century or so ago, younger brothers used to take the air and a purse

upon Hounslow Heath; and their merit then consisted in their boldness towards men, and their good breeding towards women. Now we see many a scion of many a noble house expend their small patrimony in initiation into the profession which they carry on afterwards with so much skill and success. It may almost be looked upon as sinking their capital in a business which will ultimately bring them a large return.

There is Charles S——, now :—who does not know Charles S.?—what ‘man about town’ is not proud to boast of his acquaintance?—what numberless aspirants pretend to his acquaintance, though they have it not! This man is the younger son of a baronet, and began the world with a younger brother’s fortune, of some eight thousand pounds, and a commission in the

Guards. In about two years he had lost about ten out of his eight thousand pounds, which it cost him his commission, and every thing else he had in the world, to make good. This is six or seven years ago ; and he now lives at the rate of from two to three thousand a year ;

“ Crowns in his purse he has, and goods at home—”

—money in the funds, horses, equipages, and all other *necessaries* of modern luxury. Who can say that, in a pecuniary point of view, his ten thousand pounds were not well laid out ?

Still, calculating the odds appears to me to be somewhat a dreary occupation for a lifetime ; and cutting a nine at Macao but a questionable accomplishment to have acquired during its course. With these men, play is business—it is regarded and followed

as such, and considered only with reference to the hard cash which it produces. They could not seek it as I do—for excitement, for oblivion. They could not invoke the Demon of Gaming to drive out other demons worse even than he. They watch the turn of the last card at Rouge et Noir, and of the die at Hazard, with interest, it is true; but not as I do, with the feverish anxiety I seek to raise, but which they shun with the strongest and minutest care.

And do I gain the ‘forgetfulness of other ills’ which I pay so dearly for? For the moment, perhaps I do; but when I walk home at five or six in the morning, with my eyes sunken, my head aching as if it would split, my spirits jaded, my nerves unstrung from over-excitement, the revulsion is almost as bad as the continuance of my former depression could have been. And if I am

ruined, which, as I go on, is likely enough, I shall indeed have bought this maddening excitement at a high price. I have never cared or thought about money ; perhaps for the reason that I have always had it—at least sufficiently to meet my wants. I have been careless, rather than extravagant, in my expenses : living as a bachelor, with a bachelor's no-establishment, I could afford to do this. But the last few months have *hurt* me. For the first time, I have been obliged to take thought for my resources, and ‘ this mislikes me.’ And yet, what can I do?—The enjoyments of family life, of a domestic home, are debarred from me. I cannot vegetate like a plant—never moving from the same spot ; inert, monotonous, and moping. I have tried it, and it almost wore me to death. If it had killed me at once, I should have thanked it. My mind

and heart are in an unhealthy state, and are not to be satisfied with wholesome food : Drams, mental drams, are needful for me now.

\* \* \* \* \*

[The following is of a few days' later date.]

TRULY, these places have been aptly named. They are, indeed, *Hells*. The appellation was probably originally given in jest, but it has often been a most melancholy earnest. If being the abode of the passions the most evil of our nature—of those least redeemed by one spark of nobleness or generosity—if lust of gain, if frantic and unhallowed joy, if still more frantic and desperate despair—if the sufferings and yellings of the victims, and the icy imperturbability of the presiding demon—if these can make a place resemble Hell, then have these places been rightly named.

A record of the horrors of a gaming-house would form, at once, a most curious document as regards our moral constitution, and a manual of warning to those about to enter the Charybdis of play. Its chief fault would be, the unvaried density of its shade: without any breaks of light to relieve it, it would be too oppressive to the soul. To wade through the masses of crime, and of self-wrought misery, which such a book would furnish, would be too revolting and painful. But if one of its frequenters, now and then, were to write, faithfully and minutely, his individual confessions, they would, I think, be the strongest moral lesson that ever was read upon the subject. The play of "The Gamester," as Kemble and Mrs. Siddons act it, is the most powerful rebuke to this vice which now exists; but still it is a work of Fiction—and Fiction never can possess the



moral effect which a real story furnishes. If a man who has lost fortune, fame, self-respect, (and how many are there who answer this description!) by the indulgence of this damnable passion, were to narrate the steps by which, one by one, he was deprived of these the only things which make life worth the living, it would, I am convinced, have a more powerful effect than even the inimitable representation of so tragic a story as that I have mentioned above.

It was only yesterday that I was witness to a scene, though not so awful, perhaps more revolting than the effects of gaming as pourtrayed in the work I have been alluding to. Whenever there are circumstances of tragic interest and horror, the event in which they mingle acquires, from them alone, a certain character of elevation, which

does not, perhaps, naturally belong to it. When 'Death mingles in the dance,' the awful effect which it always produces upon humanity tends to throw all the coarser and more degrading adjuncts out of view. Thus the weakness and vice of Beverley gain a degree of dignity from the very extent of their ruinous consequences. But what I beheld yesterday was wholly void of these extrinsic aids; and presented, in unrelieved deformity, the humiliating spectacle of a gentleman, and a man of honour, fallen into all the disgrace and crapulosity of base and dishonest practices.

I was at school with Jack Barnard, and have known him, off and on, all my life. We were next boys to each other in the school, and I had consequently the means of knowing him pretty accurately and intimately. He had the reputation (—and he deserved

both branches of it—) of being a very clever, and a very idle, fellow. His idleness, however, usually got the better of his talents; and he was, certainly, not nearly so distinguished, as a scholar, as many who were not, by far, naturally his equals. He grew up a very handsome fellow, also; and he thus had more advantages from the hand of Nature than are commonly given to one individual. He was a younger brother; but he inherited a small estate, which enabled him to follow the vocation of ‘a man about town’—to which he certainly was well fitted, both by the degree and the nature of his talents, as well as by his inaptitude to any continuous application. He was distinguished for conversational and convivial powers; and, in truth, I scarcely remember to have met a man more agreeable in society. His flow of spirits and of bright good-humour

was extreme; and he was, consequently, exceedingly popular, and sought after. Nor was this all. He was an honourable and a generous-minded man; and was as much esteemed for these qualities by those who can appreciate them, as he was for his more brilliant and unsubstantial attributes by the superficial butterflies of the world.

I had not seen him for some time. He had, on my last return to town, disappeared from the scene, and I could hear but little concerning him. The waves of the London world are like those of the physical sea;—they close over any thing that sinks from its surface, and display no trace to tell that it has been there. I gathered, however, that he had been unfortunate at play; and a whisper or two reached me, touching some gambling disputes, which told very ill for him, and

which, knowing him as I had done, I was very loth to give belief to.

A few days ago, however, I received a letter which dissipated at once the friendly doubts to which I had clung. I thought, at the first glance, that the hand-writing had once been familiar to me; but still I was surprised when, on turning to the last page, I saw Barnard's well-known name at the bottom. The letter was dated from the King's Bench prison; and was written in a tone half of shame, half—I can scarcely call it of effrontery, but of that reckless, assumed unconsciousness of any cause for shame existing, which is often one of the shapes in which it shews itself. Every now and then, however, there burst forth a flash of the spirits and brilliancy which had distinguished his better days,—now alas! so much ob-

scured by the dense mists of ruined fortune, and tainted fame. The purport of the letter was, ostensibly to ask me to go to see him in his new dwelling, on which he cut sundry jokes ; but I could see clearly enough, that the only reason he could desire my visit was to borrow money of me ; so (for, with all his errors and vices, he was my old companion and schoolfellow,) I put a few pounds into my pocket yesterday morning, and set off for poor Barnard's " seat in Surrey." I had never been within these celebrated walls before, and I looked forward to my visit with some curiosity. I had never been an inmate of a prison, except in company with Peregrine Pickle, Roderick Random, and Smollett's other heroes—every one of whom, by the way, Humphrey Clinker not excepted, he, at one period or other of their adventures, conducts to gaol. The general cha-

racteristics of the place, on first entering it, are still similar to what might be expected from his descriptions. There is a large open space, bounded on one side by the high brick wall surmounted with a *chevaux-de-frise*, which bespeaks the nature of the place; while on the other rises a line of shabby, squalid-looking buildings, which, at a price, little suited, I should imagine, to the circumstances of the in-dwellers, are doled out, by the square-foot, to those of whose “*res angustæ*” this is the home. The open space is, it seems, at once the promenade and the gymnasium of the prison; for the wall is partitioned off into four very good racket-grounds, in which several persons were at full play, while others contented themselves with the more moderate exercise of parading up and down near the buildings.

I inquired for Mr. Barnard, and was ac-

cordingly shewn up to his room. Jack had always been a luxurious, expensive fellow in his habits, and had occupied, for several years past, an excellent first-floor lodging in St. James's-street. It was there where I had last seen him; and certainly there was some little difference between his gay drawing-room, and the low, close, dingy hole of about twelve feet square into which I was now ushered. The man who had accompanied me from the lodge to point out my friend's quarters, had been chaunting their praises, as we had threaded passage after passage, and ascended stair after stair. I judged that the man's ideas of splendour and convenience must be in conformity with the samples of those two qualities by which he was surrounded. But, still, I was not quite prepared for their being pitched in so low a key. Yet I might have been pre-



pared too; for, as we passed along a narrow, gloomy corridor, which smelled close, sour, and faint, from the number of thickly-inhabited and ill-ventilated rooms which opened into it, my conductor said to me, "This, sir, is a nice walk for the gentlemen, when it's bad weather, or after nightfall." I might have been prepared for any thing after this.

It was about one o'clock when I was shewn into Barnard's room. He was still at breakfast; the bed was unmade, the air was close and fusty, and the room altogether foul and in disorder. B. raised his head as we entered, and a sudden gleam of joy and gratitude lighted up his sunken and wasted features. He was in his dressing-gown; was unshaved, for three days at least; a shirt of about the same date was improvidently apparent at the breast; his breeches-knees were unfastened; his stockings

were ungartered ; his whole appearance was slovenly and squalid—in one comprehensive word, it befitted his abode. For his breakfast apparatus, there appeared, on a very dirty cloth, a tea-pot with a broken spout, a half-quartern loaf, and a slice of butter resting upon a fragment of some luckless poem, instead of a plate. Added to these, I thought I caught a glimpse, as it was removed at our entrance, of what had sadly the appearance of a brandy bottle ! “ Poor, poor fellow !” thought I ; “ and art thou come to this ?”

Jack received me, at first, with a frank, open, affectionate manner. He had been taken by surprise—he was touched—and Nature, for a few minutes, had her way. But, as he recovered from the first emotion, he thought it necessary to put on that conventional assumption of no-shame, which I have

said appeared in some parts of his letter, and which is at once the surest and the most disagreeable way of shewing the existence of that shame which it so vainly strives to hide.

Heavens ! what a wreck he is become ! That fine, handsome, athletic fellow has shrunk into a stooping, shrivelled, nervous drunkard ; his eye blood-shot, his hand shaking, his breath reeking, his person unclean !—his mind, like his body, appeared to have been infected by the air of the place. He talked in its low language, and seemed imbued with its low ideas. He was become a worthy denizen of the place ; and what had brought him thither ?—Play.

Could this miserable man whom I saw before me, be the gay, the brilliant, Jack Barnard, who had so long glittered in the galaxy of fashion, and ever been distinguished from its minor stars ? Could this

be he, whose society had been courted by men, whose attentions had been always welcome to women?—To women?—Faugh!—look at him now!—And what brought him to this?—Play.

As I looked at him, Pierre's exclamation to Jaffier rose in my mind; so strongly, indeed, I had it, at the moment, on my tongue's tip:—

‘ ——— thou my once-loved valued friend?

——— the man so call'd my friend

Was gen'rous, honest, faithful, just, and valiant,

Noble in mind, and in his person lovely;

. . . . .

But thou! a wretched, base, false, worthless,

*drunkard,*

Poor even in soul, and loathsome in thy aspect;

All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest

thee!”

—But, no! I was compelled to despise poor

Jack, but I could not detest him ; I felt no anger towards him, not a jot ; pity, sorrow, contempt, if you will—but detestation I could not feel.

I found, as I had expected, that to borrow, or rather to beg, money of me was the true cause of Barnard's desiring to see me. He thought, perhaps, (possibly he had judged by experience in other quarters), that I might either take no notice of his letter, or coolly refuse his request, if he had made it by that means ; while, no doubt, he supposed the heart of an old schoolfellow could not resist the horrors of the prison, if once he could get him to come to see them.

He had no need, poor fellow, Heaven knows ! to use any extraneous means to induce me to grant him what assistance I could ; but, even if, like Sterne, “ I had predetermined not to give him a single sou,

it would have been impossible for me to have withstood the plea, true or false, on which he grounded his request. He said he had a new-comer “chummed in upon him”—and he wanted money “to chum him out.” On enquiring into the meaning of this jargon, I found that each of these rooms (as they are by courtesy called in the prison) was liable to four inmates !—but that, if the first occupier was rich enough to pay the rest a certain weekly modicum, to keep away, he then might have it to himself; while they hired a share of some hole with half the sum, and lived upon the rest ! And this, Barnard told me, was the sole source of subsistence of a very large proportion of the prisoners !

Being here, I naturally wished to see what there was to be seen ; and B. undertook to shew me over the prison. Whilst he was

dressing, I went down into the Court, to look a little about me, to say nothing of my anxiety, by this time, to breathe a fresher air. I was more struck with the great *variety* of appearance among the prisoners, than with any other one point about them. Some were dressed far better—that is, far more point device in the fashion—than myself; and were, in every respect, figures which one would expect rather to meet in St. James's-street than within the walls of the Bench. The class next below these were “shabby genteel”—they had good clothes and dirty linen, or clothes well cut and of good materials, but woefully shabby and threadbare. All these men seemed to have a dash of what is vulgarly called “the blood” about them; and, indeed, I thought I recognized one or two of their faces, as having seen them at Tattersal's. Others, again, seemed to be driven to

every shift and device to make an appearance in any degree decent. Coloured handkerchiefs, without any collar ; coats buttoned to the throat ; gaiters and boots strenuously drawn up to meet the knee-band—all these shifts were to be seen, to supply, or to conceal, the foulness or the lack of linen. The next degree lower again, scorned any such hypocritical devices : they appeared in undisguised squalidity and filth. In them the very remnants of shame had long since passed away. Among this class were certainly some as unpromising-looking ruffians as any I ever beheld. Some of these fellows had let their beards grow till they looked like Caliban ; others appeared in every conceivable incongruity of dress, as if they had disposed of the major part of their wardrobe, and were now clothed with the fragments. There was a considerable number of low huckster-



looking shops, in which those who possessed a little money could contrive to get rid of it. A coffee-house, and the shops of various dealers in eatables, were conspicuous. As I stood near a tolerable-looking butcher's, a man came out with a lank mutton-chop between his fingers ; whom, on looking into his face, I recognized as having been, a few years back, one of the most fashionable and fastidious men about town !

I walked forward to the racket-ground, where a game of some interest was going forward. From constant practice, these men are excellent players ; and I stood looking on attentively through the vicissitudes of a game between, as I was told, two of the best of them, who seemed to me to be pretty equally matched. At last, one of them got the advantage, and exclaimed—" I 'll bet two to one, I win the game !"—" Done !"

exclaimed a voice from behind me ; and, on looking round, I beheld Barnard, who could not even resist this miserable gambling in this miserable place. And, in two minutes, I saw him hand over, with the utmost coolness, one of the guineas I had given him, which were the last and the only he had in the world.

He looked cleaner than he had done in his own room ; for he was washed and shaved, and had a clean shirt on ; but his dress was dilapidated to the last degree, and the broad daylight shewed still more forcibly what an utter wreck he had become. His face was bloated and discoloured ; his leg was shrivelled ; his whole form bespoke that most wretched of all things—vicious penury!

He proceeded to shew me round the prison ; and, before long, I affected not to have known it was so late, and abridged my visit :

for he seemed to be hail-fellow-well-met with all these vulgar ruffians; and I could not bear to witness such utter degradation, on the part of one whom I had once admired and loved.

How omnivorous is the Fiend of Gaming ! It not only flies at the higher game of family ruin, and despair, and suicide ; but it stoops to prey upon garbage like this ! Nay, more ; it prepares the loathsome morsel for itself, and does not sicken in the process. Alas ! alas ! who could have thought such a fate awaited a man like Barnard—so generous, so brilliant ? It is too painful to think that he has thoroughly sunken to suit it.

## EXTRACT XXI.

“ ——— Wealth is the burthen of my wooing-dance.”

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

[From the Diary.]

London, March, 1801.

I CAN scarcely bear to think of it; and yet I begin to fear it must be so, after all. Nay, I must resolve one way or the other speedily, for my fortune is in no state to brook delay. Of all things, this is the very last which I could have thought would ever happen to me. Of all predictions, it is that which I should have considered the most false. To marry for money!—I, who was used to figure to myself, with such fasti-

diousness, the only circumstances under which I would marry, and their inestimable value, if they were ever accomplished!—I, who have had this cup at my very lip, and then have seen it dashed from me for ever!—I, whose feelings of love have been in the grave for years, and which can never kindle into life again! Is it possible? Am I now hesitating, and weighing *pros* and *cons*, whether or not to marry a woman whose only attraction to me is her wealth, and whom, if my fortune were as it was three years ago, I would not marry if she were Queen of Sheba?

Alas! it is too true! “to this complexion am I come at last;” and truly it does not differ more from my former colour of mind, than did the unsightly skull, to which the simile refers, from the cheek painted an inch thick, to which Hamlet prophesies this ultimate

condition. I am a ruined man; and Poverty is the very last guest to whom I am fitted to give reception. At my age, and with my habits, I may say with truth, "I cannot dig." I, who have always had my bread without working, cannot begin to toil for it at five-and-thirty. And as for begging—in sooth, that vocation, however ancient, would not be likely, in my case, to be a very thriving one. I have sold every thing I can sell, except myself; and I suppose *that* must go too at last. Truly, the fair widow will receive what may well be designated by the article which implies an inanimate object, if she buy me. My spirits and buoyancy of temper are more wasted even than my fortune—my heart is in *her* grave!

But why do I mention her?—how *can* I mention her, thus in conjunction with a subject which involves my infidelity to her

memory?—But no, that can never be! For once, there is truth in the distinction which the French draw between inconstancy and infidelity. Inconstant my necessities may, perhaps, oblige me to prove—unfaithful I never can be. My heart will remain true to my buried bride, even while my lips pronounce the vows which shall bind me to a living one!

And is it come to this? Shall I, must I pronounce those vows indeed? Never, never, was the often-quoted line cited with more intimate truth,—

“ My poverty, but not my will, consents.”

Yet, after all, why should I feel so repugnant towards one who has manifested so much prepossession towards me? She has nothing disagreeable in her person. On the contrary, it is rather good than otherwise:—she is well connected; she is still young,—

five and twenty, at the outside. Indeed, her age is better suited to mine than if she were still in her teens. There is nothing to gainsay in all this; and yet I shrink from it most unaccountably. Her fortune is very large, and would place me on that score higher than I ever was. Still, it is sheer poverty which drives me, and that reluctantly, into the match at all. In addition to the causes which naturally indispose me towards marriage, the party is not such as I should have chosen. I am convinced she has not much heart; perhaps, under all the circumstances, it is better it should be so; for, as I cannot repay love with love, it is better that it should not be felt by a woman of keen and delicate feelings. Do I not then even think that the woman to whom I am about to link myself loves me?—Why, yes; after a fashion, I think



she does;—but, oh! how different from the love with which I should have been satisfied in a wife, had I married in former days! If I were an unknown *contadino*, or an obscure *cit*, I am pretty sure that the merits of my sweet self would never have engaged her attention. I owe her reception of me, I believe, more to the way in which I am known and received in that world, to which she looks for every opinion and every taste, than to myself personally. How much less flattering soever this opinion may be to my self-esteem, I have seen too often her veneration and strict obedience to the laws of the code of Fashion, to think that any mortal motive could induce her to marry “a man whom nobody knows.” It is the first good, if it be a good, which I ever derived from my footing in the world—as a small part of this town chuses to call itself.

Of one thing, however, I am determined: if I do marry her, I will never take her to Dodderidge. As I cannot sell it, I will let it for my life, to prevent any possibility of her occupying *the boudoir*. The boudoir! Gracious Heaven! what a train of thought does that word conjure up! What a different preparation for marriage was that!—I do believe, the weeks I passed there at that time were the happiest period of my life. Oh! there are remembrances which, though the world may lull them for a moment, constantly, and for ever, will rush back with double force upon the heart;—which make that heart swell and yearn, and which cause us to grind our teeth in the very agony of irrevocable regret! She lives ever in my soul—she rises ever before my eyes; and yet I am on the threshold of marriage with another! Fool that I have been! how my

life has been thrown away ! How could I think that I should have further cause for regret, after having lost her?—Yet, this accursed marriage strikes upon my heart with a pang of remorse, as if it violated that sanctuary in which her image has ever been enshrined. No ! I cannot—I cannot.—I will rather starve ! —Starve?—Alas ! I fear that *is* the alternative !

If I could call back time !—alas ! that is always the wish of those who have misemployed it and flung it away. I am just at what is in other men the prime of their lives : how long that is past in me ! I was born to a competent fortune,—I was born (for, why should I be mock-modest ?) with powers sufficient to have enabled me to *enter*, at least, the path of ambition ;—and now I am trembling on the brink of a mercenary marriage, to keep myself out of gaol ! And

what have I got to shew for my time, my fortune, and my talents? A chilled and enervated heart, a weakened constitution, and beggary. My time has been spent in making myself wretched; the means of which have been making others wretched also. My talents have been frittered away in the pursuit of women, and my fortune has been scattered at the gaming-table. I should knock any man down who said this of me; but I say it of myself,—and it is true.

## EXTRACT XXII.

*Wildbrain.* They are come from church now.

*Lurcher.* Any great preparation ?

Does Justice Algripe shew his power ?

*Wildbrain.* Very glorious,

And glorious people there.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER.

Friars' Stoke, June, 1801.

I THANK you, my dear Frewin, for your congratulations on my marriage. I am very certain that you do, indeed, wish me joy, and, what is more, happiness ; not in the mere formula of words, but with the strongest force of their original meaning. Whether I shall have them or not is another matter, which I will not discuss at present.

Every thing passed off at the wedding in due form, and with due success. There was a proper number of favours, and a proper quantity of bride-cake, and white lace, and white satin. Leader turned out our bridal chariot in a way which satisfied even her brother, the major, whose whole life has been devoted to the study of these things; and, as I had consulted him in the purchase of the four bays which drew it, of course they were honoured with his approbation also. For my own part, I would have given any thing to have avoided all this display and ostentation; but I saw she expected and wished for it, and seemed to consider it a matter of course; so I would not begin quarrelling with her before marriage, about the manner of the very marriage itself. I would have escaped it, if I could, for other reasons than those which lie on the surface. I had

not been at a wedding at St. George's since poor Blanch Delvyn's; and that, as you may suppose, was no very pleasant reminiscence. Poor, poor creature! I almost fancied I could see her, as she stood shrinking and trembling with agony—yet striving to controul her agitation, to spare her pride the humiliation of seeming to suffer before her dolt of a bridegroom. If he had been only a dolt, it would not so much have mattered, but I believe he was a sad brute also. I question, indeed, which was the most so, her ugly and stupid first husband, or her handsome and clever second; from the circumstances, I think the latter.

Would you believe it, I thought more during the ceremony which was fixing the fate of my life, of that of which I was only a spectator sixteen years ago, than of what was passing at the moment, and in which

I was so prominent an actor? Indeed, I was but too happy to be able to fix my thoughts on any subject but *one*, and yet that one could scarcely at any time be said to be wholly absent from my mind.—But this is an interdicted topic.

This is a very pretty spot, this villa of her's. It is more thoroughly woodland than almost any place I ever inhabited. I could fancy myself a ranger of the days of old, with hawk, and cross-bow, and bolt, and hound, and green jerkins, and bugle-horns, and hunting-hangers slung in buff baldricks, and all the *et ceteras* of antient forestry. By the way, these are the points to which our poets, and *laudatores temporis acti*, look, and on which they dwell. They say nothing of the peasant thrust from his home, his roof-tree broken, his hearth laid bare, and all the cruel and bloody effects of the Nor-



man forest-laws. Perhaps it is out of respect to their descendants, the modern game laws; which bear the same resemblance to them as a modern lord in Rotten Row does to his ancestor in casque and corslet.

The place is only a villa, and therefore not very extensive; but we have all the advantage of the forest round; vistas open into it through green alleys, as far as the eye can reach. The house, too, is admirable; fitted in the extreme of luxury, not always, perhaps, in the best of taste, but better than I had expected. Marsh, probably, was in great measure left to himself, which may account for it. I fear we may not hope at present to see you and Lady Katharine here; but next year you must not fail us. Again, thanks for all your kind expressions. God bless you! my oldest and best friend.

P. B.

[From the Diary.]

THANK Heaven ! I have answered most of the congratulatory letters on my marriage. Eugh !—what a labour it has been to mince through the usual common-places of namby-pamby thanks for namby-pamby compliments—vapid, worldly, worthless all ! And yet, my letter to Frewin, where I was under no restraint, cost me, probably, more trouble than all the rest together. To him, I could not shelter myself under the set-phrases appertaining to the occasion. Still less could I write in the tone of a rapturous bridegroom revelling in the society of his bride. I am sure I never wrote a letter so little to the point : I believe I talked of every thing except my marriage and my wife.

“ My wife ? ” Is it so, then, at last ? Have

I, in reality, a wife? I have often dreamed I had one; and have been delighted, when I awoke, to find I had only dreamed it. But I believe it is real this time. Still, the conjunction of the two words "my wife" is strange to me, and I can scarcely bring either my pen or my tongue to connect them glibly. And yet, how eternal these three weeks have seemed since our marriage! or rather, perhaps, each individual day and hour! To keep up a tête-à-tête with such a woman is more laborious than breaking stones on the highway. Such shallowness—such emptiness! Her *line* is being languid and sentimental: the first she accomplishes by lying on a couch with a novel in her hand, of which she has read about a third of the first volume since we have been here. The weather is superb—that of a real English summer, (which, when it *does* occur, is the

most delicious of all things,) the country is most beautiful, her own gardens are exquisite, and yet she has been out only three times since she has been here, and only once farther than the lawn! She cannot bear the fatigue, forsooth! She, who is as strong and healthy as a dairy-maid! As to her sentiment, she has about as much of it as Aboukir, the great dog. She talks sentimentality, which is a certain sign of real sentiment not existing within. And accordingly, I find they have scarcely ever seen her in the village, where, of course, its own proportion of distress exists—distress which is so soothed and alleviated, especially when sickness is added to it, by the mere presence, and a few kind expressions, of the *Dame du lieu*. But “her feelings are too sensitive to allow her to witness such scenes!” Stuff! they are not too sensitive for her to suffer them

to exist. How paltry and contemptible are all the prettinesses of sentiment in comparison with active humanity!—how false, indeed, are they without it! They remind me of Rousseau, who aspired to be the founder of the first rational system of education the world had seen, sending his own children to the Foundling Hospital. Probably, after all, it was better for them than if they had been so many Emiles.

I never can believe in the sensibility of a person who, placed in the situation to which I have alluded, does not take advantage of it, to benefit and assist the neighbouring poor. There is, probably, no position in which there is so much, and such easy, power of doing good. To listen, with apparent sympathy and interest, to the little tale of the misfortunes and sorrows of a villager whom poverty pinches, or sickness

afflicts, is a kindness conferred upon the feelings, as other assistance is upon physical wants. If fine ladies did but know the extent of this—if they had heard, as I have heard, the heart-springing blessings, and the gushing prayers, which are breathed for persons who act thus, they would, I think, lay by, for the nonce, some portion of their fineness, and strive to taste what is at once the sweetest and most exalted pleasure which human beings can taste—that of doing good.

I have seen the way in which Lady Katharine Frewin is regarded in her village. The feelings of hearty kindliness, and those of veneration, are mingled in a manner which leaves it doubtful which preponderate. Oh ! how I have sometimes envied Frewin, when I have seen the tears rise into his eyes from that deep and beautiful enjoyment, the hear-

ing one we loved praised—the witnessing a sudden and inexpressible ebullition and outpouring of gratitude and affection, and (if I may couple the terms) of fond respect, towards her who is all in all to us in this world. I myself have sometimes had opportunities of hearing these excellent persons spoken of, in their own neighbourhood, with all the freedom arising from ignorance of the presence of any one interested concerning them. During that which was at once the happiest and the saddest year of my life, I used to think, will *she* cause me to be thus spoken of hereafter, around our own residence?—that she herself would be so spoken of, I was certain.

Shall I ever see Dodderidge again? It is very doubtful; I certainly never shall live there. Yet, how I have loved, how I love, that place! All the recollections of my

childhood and my early youth are connected with it. There is not a tree, nor a stone, that does not call up a crowded train of associations of my early days. My poor mother, too—my excellent mother—it is with Dodderidge that her image is most intimately connected in my memory. There, indeed, was her worthy home; there she was beloved by all, gentle and simple; there she was endeared to all by some act of kindness or friendship, or of direct benevolence. Ah! if she had lived longer—to preside at my table, to direct my household, I might, nay I must, have proved a very different person from the reckless cast-away I have been. In the first place, I should not have gone ‘walking the world’ so early, so long, so completely my own master. There would have been the moral controul of being domesticated with such a parent; I should



have had her feelings to respect, her expectations to answer. I should have had a check from evil, an impulse towards good. If any thing could have restrained the natural bent of temperament, it would have been my affection, my veneration for my mother.

And probably it *would* have been restrained. For it was chiefly to its first development that it owed its future expansion and exclusiveness. If I had not, at seventeen, fallen into the hands of a person like Mathilde du Buissy, my whole course of life might have been different. But she was exactly formed to win and to spoil a boy of strong passions and romantic feelings. She was young enough, and beautiful enough, to attract him most powerfully; she was ardent enough, and sufficiently in earnest, to gratify his feelings of romance, and quite to

intoxicate his self-love ; while, on the other hand, she was old enough, and French enough, to be a perfect mistress of the whole theory and practice of the heart ; she had her own feelings sufficiently under command to do what she pleased with mine, while they were sufficiently excited and engaged to give her animation and interest in the connection. Add to all this, the graceful talents of society so much possessed by most of her countrywomen at that period ; and, I think, I could not have fallen into better hands for moulding me into what I afterwards became. But, in an additional way, also, this woman influenced the formation of my character. When the intoxication of my passion for her was over, and the *glamour* fell from my eyes, I became, even at that early period of life, pretty well aware of her real character, as I have painted it.

This tended both to deaden that fine feeling of romance, which is perhaps one of the most valuable (because the most easily lost) of the properties of youth,—and also to give me premature experience and knowledge of those folds of the female heart—of those springs of womanly action, with which men seldom become so early acquainted. Her stock of knowledge was, as it were, transferred bodily to me ; and I was naturally too vain of its acquisition, and too eager to assay its quality, not to rush immediately into that course of life, which has made me—what I am now !

I know very well, for I have felt it, how flattering it is to the vanity of a young man to possess and to exert this species of knowledge. But I could tell any one, who may be beginning to employ it, that, if he do, he will never repent it but once, and that will

be all his life. I may speak on the subject, for I have had experience, bitter experience. "I waive the quantum o' the sin"—I will put it, not upon its effects upon others, (which is the chief and most fearful part,) but upon himself. Not to theorise, here is an example. I recollect perfectly, in the days of my early manhood, in the first flush of my successes, in despite of all my friendship for Frewin, I used, on this particular subject, to feel towards him a certain pity, perhaps a little tainted with contempt. And now, as indeed, on looking over what I have written to-day, is sufficiently apparent, he is, as regards his ultimate fortunes with respect to women, the object of my greatest envy.\* There could scarcely be a stronger instance than this.

\* Envy is not the word—but we have none in the language, that I know of. Envy, without its malice, is what I mean to express.—*Note of Mr. Blount.*

Then, the anxieties, the regrets, the remorse—the deep and crushing sorrow—the dark, heavy, indescribable, insupportable melancholy—the false, feverish, and desperate excitements—the vacuity and destitution of the revulsions which succeed ;—all these are branches from the same root—all these are fruits of which the blossoms are such sweet and fair flowers !

Well, now, if I can, I am to take a fresh departure—I am to appear in my new character of married man. Heaven only knows how it will sit upon me, with a partner like that I have chosen. Chosen? No ;—there was no choice in the case. Will you marry, or will you starve ? This was the question which stern Fate proposed to me. I have married. Having done so, I must make the best of it. It is vain to look back, as I have been doing, to what might have been.

What *is*, is fixed, and to that I must turn my thoughts.—Madame must have made her toilet by this time, and I will go and see what she is about.

## EXTRACT XXIII.

“ Rien ne nous affecte vivement, rien ne nous intéresse à un certain point. Une mollesse efféminée et la paresse se glissant dans les cercles des oisifs, énervent bientôt l'âme, et l'empêchent de sentir. . . . La beauté mâle et touchante des grands objets ne nous remue plus ; nous nous attachons au colifichet, et nôtre goût devient mince, inconstant, et frivole.”

GRIMM.

[From the Diary.]

London, February, 1802.

WHAT a miserable, empty, vapid, heartless, ignorant thing is the World, so called, of Fashion ! Such coldness, such fatuity, such utter froth !

“ Nature it thwarts, and contradicts all reason :  
'Tis stiff French stays, and fruit—when out of  
season ;

A rose—if half-a-guinea be the price ;  
A set of bays, scarce bigger than six mice ;  
To visit those we never wish to see ;  
Marriage 'twixt those who never can agree ;  
Old dowagers dress'd, painted, patch'd, and  
curl'd—

This is Bon Ton, and this we call The World !”\*

—Though these spirited and graphic lines are nearly forty years old, they are, with very slight allowances for the change of passing fashions, strictly applicable still. Empty vanity, cold hypocrisy, shallow pretension ; these are the characteristics of the race, now as then. And have I only just found this out?—Have I lived to these years to make this notable discovery at this time of day?—No, truly ; I have had a pretty clear conception of the state of things, since they were first subjected to my observation. But, as a

\* Colman the Elder's Prologue to Bon Ton.



single man, it is not necessary to subject oneself to any particular part of the varied and fantastic medley which may chance to be distasteful. I had, therefore, hitherto taken the cream, according to my individual taste and judgment, off the milk of London society. There is no place, I think, in the world, where, to drop all metaphor, so much, and such excellent, social enjoyment is to be found as there is in this town, if we know where and how to look for it. But again, if we mix, either from choice, or from force of circumstances, with the full throng of the 'London season,' there can, I think, be, scarcely by possibility, any thing more slight, shallow, valueless, and uninteresting than the general run of the persons whom we shall find there.

For my own part, having been much on the Continent in the early part of my life.

I did not, at that time, acquire the London habits; which, when so acquired, generally stick to a man through life. I had enjoyed, indeed, too much of the pleasantest society in Paris, in its best times, very much to relish what I found to be the common run of parties, &c. in London. I, thence, gave some time (it will always take some time) and some trouble, to sift the society which I met; and, letting the chaff and dust fall to the ground, selected with care and assiduity the real grain which remained behind. Take it all in all, *this* perhaps was at all times better in London than any where else in the world:—since the Revolution, it has certainly been so. Confining myself, therefore, chiefly to this, I have never been sufficiently crossed by the things and qualities which I have been reprobating, very strongly to excite my spleen against them. If I found they an-

noyed me, I got out of their way ; and there was an end of it.

But now the case is greatly altered. Married to a woman to whose tastes I owe some consideration, I am no longer so wholly master of my own choice of society. And, as her tastes unhappily lead her to the barren land of Fashion, I am, in a great degree, compelled to accompany her on her journey.

It is, indeed, a barren and an unwholesome land. It produces nothing itself ; and it poisons and withers up every bud of generous feeling and warm disposition which comes within the influence of its *malaria*. How many young and amiable persons have I not seen spoiled, utterly spoiled, by being Fashion-bitten ! Like the bite of a mad dog, it makes them shrink from the natural streams of unsophisticated tastes and feelings. They no longer see, hear, feel, smell, taste,

as their own uncorrupted temperaments would lead them. Every thing is conventional, every thing is false. They put on glasses coloured with the colouring of Fashion, and every object is tinted with their hue. Every natural and spontaneous burst of feeling is repressed or checked in its birth ; every generous emotion is lost, or, at the best, hidden.

Why is it that we never get thoroughly acquainted with people, women especially, whom we meet only in London? Why is it that ten days passed together in a country-house give you more real insight into a person's character, than as many years in the common intercourse of town life? Because every thing here is strained, cold, and artificial ; because nothing is undisguised, unacted, real. Hence arise the vast number of ill-assorted and unhappy marriages which

annually take place. Two persons meet each other at balls and parties—at the most, they sit next to each other a few times at dinner. But, as for what the real character, disposition, talents, and (what is more important than all) the real temper of each other may be, they have scarcely more accurate or detailed knowledge than if they had never met.

Nor is this all. If the world of Fashion spoils many, how many more are there in whom there has never been any thing to spoil—and that, too, among those who figure in its foremost ranks, and have enjoyed some of its chief successes? It is not, certainly, so common as it used to be, to see men vain of their lack of information, and of (all but fashionable) acquirement; though even now we do meet such things sometimes. But with women it is the case every day. “I

don't aspire to be blue"—“ I am not a learned lady,” are the phrases which are uttered with a lisping sneer, in excuse for ignorance, which a boy in the third form at Eton would be flogged for. I detest and despise ‘ the blues,’ as much as, probably more than, those who are the loudest and most frequent in their condemnation. But I do so, not because they possess sense and information, but for a contrary reason ; because they are noisy pretenders to them, and possess them not ; or at the best, some few of them, who may have some smattering, are pedantic in its display ; and that is almost as bad as the other. But I am yet to learn, that ignorance is a thing to be justly vain of ; or that the mincing affectation of infantine vacuity is not to the full as revolting as it is certainly more insipid, than even the follies of the worst denomination of *bas-bleus*

who ever bored one at a conversazione. How strange it is, that the persons with whom we are to pass our lives, in the most constant and intimate intercourse, should strive to recommend themselves to us by setting forth that they are incapable of understanding one word in ten we say.

Constantly mixing in society like this—discussing and taking interest in the petty questions which arise in such a body, must necessarily contract the mind, and reduce it, if it were originally of a higher order, to the level of those by whom it is surrounded. Accordingly, we find men who are nothing but men of fashion, to be the most empty unprofitable coxcombs of any of the varieties of that most extensive genus. If they are not quite so frivolous as the women, they are more contemptible; for frivolity is less fitted to their sex.

Let me single out, like Sterne, an individual captive in the cage of Fashion, into whose soul, not the iron, but the tinsel, has entered; whose energies, once equal to greater things, have, like the Ogre's seven-league boots, when drawn upon the legs of Hop-o'-my-Thumb, contracted themselves to the size and weight of the matters to which they have been, for so many years, directed. He would almost be worthy of the name of the hero of Antoine Hamilton's fairy-tale,—he might well be called 'Prince Fiddlestick!' I have one in my mind's-eye at this moment, but whom I will not name, with whom I was at College, and who was originally a man of some capabilities of mind. For the first year he was there, he remained suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between literature and foppery; but (for in those days fantastic colours were still worn) a pink satin lining to a coat of Lord B.'s



turned the scale, and he has been engrossed by fashion and a feather ever since. A wrinkle in his leather breeches is to him, like the doubled rose-leaf of the Sybarite, positive agony; and he was once, if it would not have discomposed his neckcloth, nearly cutting his throat, on account of being disappointed in receiving a card for a particular party at Lady ———'s. He judges of a man, not by his being well-bred, or well-informed, nor even by his being rich; but by his being well or ill-dressed. I have seen ineffable and overflowing pity and contempt beam upon his lip, on meeting an acquaintance in a last-year's coat. And he cut the best friend he had in the world, because, one day, he took shelter from a shower of rain in a Chelsea stage. In society he says little, except sometimes to correct an error as to "what is allowable;" which he does with

a gravity equally sincere and ridiculous. His gravity, indeed, is seldom disturbed.

“ He never laughs, whatever jest prevails.”

He goes farther than the Delphic oracle of his tribe, \* who says that laughter is a most vulgar way of shewing mirth; for he holds that mirth is a very vulgar emotion, and ought never to find entrance into the breast of a fine gentleman. Emotions of all kinds, indeed, are to be deprecated; and, to do him justice, he is as impassive, imperturbable, and cold, as if he were really the block in the barber's shop-window. Truly, this unfeathered biped is worthy to rank among that species called Man!

As a *pendant* to this picture, we have Lady ———. Her heart, mind, soul, and body have, for years, been engrossed and

\* Lord Chesterfield.

swallowed up by this one pursuit. If it be less ridiculous and offensive in her sex than among men, as regards frivolity, it is probably more repulsive with respect to matters of the heart. In woman, where the energies of the intellect are usually less called into action, those of the feelings receive a proportionate increase of force and developement. We are so accustomed to find it, that we look for it in all cases, even in those where it does not exist. Accordingly, Lady———believes the maxim, that Love is the history of woman's life, while it is only an episode in that of man. Fashion is the history of her life, and if Love ever existed in it, it was only a very brief digression at the beginning. There is a tradition, indeed, that she was in love, as a girl, with L. of the Guards, or, rather, with the clothes to which he was appended; for he had, at that time,

the reputation of being the best-dressed man in London. But she was doomed to the common destiny of women of the world;—

“ A fop her passion, but her prize a sot,”—

She married old Lord ——, who had a coronet and a house in Grosvenor-square to offer her; and scarcely bestowed a sigh upon the Colonel, who had nothing in the world but his commission, an epaulette, and a good pair of legs. From that time she has followed her vocation. If her heart has ever whispered to her, which I doubt, she has never listened to it for a moment, but kept on the *un-even* “tenor of her way,” struggling to the top of the gaudy pyramid of Fashion—now on the point of reaching the apex, and now again passed by some newer competitor in the race. And is it to objects like these that woman should yield up that fairest and most lovely gift of Nature—her

young heart? Is it to the cold glitter of the unfeeling world that she should sacrifice the warmth and freshness of her early life? Oh! did but women know how much the natural charm of unsophisticated feeling is superior, in the eyes and to the hearts of all men who deserve the name, to the utmost triumphs of Fashion, they would not abandon pure and touching Nature to follow her cold, callous, and fantastic opposite.

But in these persons there was scarcely any thing to spoil. Even Fashion could hardly make them more silly, frivolous, and heartless than they originally were. They embraced her doctrines without hesitation, and followed them without regret. But there *are* instances in which she has much more to answer; where feelings originally warm have been chilled, and talents originally good have been nullified, by her tor-

pedo touch. I recollect, when I was at Dodderidge, seven or eight years ago, remarking, on account of her beauty and graceful manners, the daughter of a neighbour of mine, a country-gentleman of moderate fortune, with whom I was acquainted. This girl, it was said, was engaged to be married to a young clergyman, a cousin of her own, whose family lived in the next county; a very excellent and well-informed young man, who had distinguished himself much at the University; and was only waiting to take priest's orders, to be inducted to a valuable living, and to marry the object of his early attachment. He was a very good-looking fellow into the bargain, and was a very respectable proficient in those little accomplishments of society, which are of more importance, often, in female estimation, than classical arguments, or College honours.

As ill-luck, however, would have it, the winter previous to their intended marriage, this young person passed with an aunt of her's in town. The aunt lived in the throng of fashionable life ; and, seeing her niece to be attractive, both in person and manners, she, first insidiously, and then more directly, strove to inculcate into her that she was worthy of better things than a country parson—that she would be completely throwing herself away, if she married him ; to be mewed up in an obscure village—and all the other arguments so easily available in such a case. These preachments were followed up by a constant and intoxicating round of dissipation, where the admiration she met with totally turned the poor girl's head, and made her look back almost with disdain upon the simple pleasures of her earlier life, and the unfashionable lover to

whom she was betrothed. The consequence was, that when he came to town in the Spring, she was almost ashamed of him, in the midst of the gay and glittering crowd by which she was surrounded; and the matter ended in the match being broken off, after his feelings had been cut to the quick during its course.

What was the ultimate fate of the two parties? He, who had been sacrificed to Fashion, after some time married another; and, when I was down in ——shire, last year, to let Dodderidge, I met him and his family, and almost pictured them to myself as the *beau idéal* of calm happiness. I was just going to be married myself, which might, perhaps, have been the occasion of my drawing the——contrast, I was going to say.

The lady married also—a very fashionable, very needy, very profligate man. I



happened to see her last week. She was withered in person; her fine form was shrunk, and her fine bloom was faded away. Her eye looked haggard, and as though it were the habitual seat of sorrow. Her husband is said to be a man of execrable temper; and his neglect is, I believe, the best part of his conduct towards her. Still she drags on the monotonous round of Fashion, for which she sacrificed so much—to which she now is herself a victim. She now finds, I take it, how weary, stale, and unprofitable the world soon becomes to its votaries; and that one touch of true Nature, and real feeling, is worth all its pleasures and pageants put together. But now, *it is too late.*

## EXTRACT XXIV.

“ London now is out of town,  
Who in England tarries ?  
Who can bear to linger there,  
When all the world's at Paris ?

SONG.

[From the Diary.]

Paris, July, 1802.

MERCY upon me ! how every thing is changed in this town, since I was here last ! To be sure, they have been stirring years which have elapsed since then ; and, with regard to political matters, I was of course pretty well prepared to find what I have found. But I did not quite expect, though perhaps I ought, so complete a re-

volution in society also. The Fauxbourg St. Germain is deserted.—At Versailles, grass grows in the courts.—Instead of a King with powdered hair, ‘à l’aile de pigeon,’ and a ‘habit Français,’ I find a Consul with lank locks, and a general’s uniform, reviewing his troops, on a white horse at full gallop. In like manner every vestige, not only of the *vieille cour*, but of the former state of society altogether, has passed away. No coteries, no *petit soupers*, no conversation teeming with subtle compliments, and epigrammatic turns of expression. Every thing now seems active and energetic—occasionally coarse, perhaps, and with the faults arising from coarseness; but, for that very reason, perfectly free from all those which appertain to frivolity. Society certainly is not so brilliant and refined, nor is it nearly so agreeable to those who seek

it merely for society's sake; but it bespeaks a much higher and stronger tone to pervade men's minds in general throughout the country. There is no longer that monotony, which, in despite of all its charms, was undoubtedly felt even in the delightful *réunions* of which I speak. The great events, which have so recently passed at home and abroad, prevent the petty topics of passing occurrences to have the same interest which they formerly had, in the absence of all more stirring subjects of discussion.

But, in despite of all this, which I am obliged to admit, when I come coolly to think upon the subject, certain it is that *to me* Paris gives very inferior gratification to what it formerly gave. To be sure, I have undergone my revolution also: I am older, sadder, in weaker health, and married. When I first came to Paris in eighty-eight,

I was young, in full health and blood, eager in my pursuit of pleasure, and tolerably successful in obtaining it. I had the good fortune also to gain admittance into a most delightful circle. Without being at all a literary man myself, I mixed with the *gens de lettres*. Marmontel's house was open to me, and Grimm I met constantly, and listened, with the utmost interest, to the piquant observations upon what was passing around us, which gave so peculiar a charm and vivacity to his conversation. Now, Marmontel is dead, Grimm has retreated to the court of his old patron the Duke of Saxe Gotha ; all who composed that set are dispersed and gone. The Abbé Morellet is the only one of them who remains ; and he now is more remarkable for that circumstance itself, than for the animated and sensible social talents which he contributed in those days, as his

share of that exquisite mental *pic-nic*. I have been to see him; and our conversation almost wholly turned upon the total extinction of the society in which we had formerly met.

Now, I am here, not to reside some time, and to mix with the Parisians as a resident; but as a mere John Bull traveller, with my wife in one hand, and my catalogue in the other, come to see the sights. And, plague take it! my wife is as much out of place here, as any cockney dame who has never been out of the sound of Bow bell. I may almost be thankful that there are no longer such *soirées*, as those at poor Madame de Corvillac's; for, upon my soul! I should scarcely dare present her there. Not that she is not very well presentable, if she would but hold her tongue: but she talks such ineffable nonsense; she asks such excruciating

questions ; she——but I will not talk of her just now.

With respect to ‘ the sights,’ there can be no doubt of their extreme increase and improvement since the Revolution. The collection at the Louvre is certainly the most splendid assemblage of productions of art in the world. I shall not stop to enquire how it came there ; it is sufficient that it *is* there, for me to go and luxuriate upon its riches, day after day.

Alas ! with what emotions did I behold the Venus, here in her new abode ! I last saw her at Florence.—At Florence ! Oh ! what a world of memory dwells in that one word ! What a tissue of fond thoughts, of passionate affection, of deep love, does it call up ? My visit there was the crisis of my life, as *a subsequent time* was its catastrophe. The sight of this statue made those

days almost present to me again—present for all the painful condiments of passion, but not including any of its delightful attributes. I recollect going to pass hours in the gallery, day after day, while the fever of anxiety was preying upon my heart, that I might, if possible, forget the passage of time, in the contemplation of all the beauties and wonders by which I was surrounded. In the Tribune, and in the Cabinet of Bronzes, I used mostly to take my stand—gazing, in the one, on all its peculiar riches of art, both in sculpture and in painting ; and, in the other, on that exquisite piece of statuary which almost renders the presence of any thing else needless.\*

But, though my eyes were on the Venus, (in marble or on canvass) the Fornarina, the

\* Mr. Blount, I believe, alludes to the figure known by the name of John of Bologna's Mercury.



Apollino, or the Mercury, my mind was not with them. My mind ceaselessly dwelled upon the effect my letter might have upon her—upon the chances for and against her compliance. Suspense is certainly the most wearing and intolerable, though not the severest, of all mental inflictions: it, more thoroughly than any other, incapacitates the mind for any continuous attention, the body for any rest. And during those days, accordingly, when the fate of my life was in the balance, when no exertion of my own could influence the decision one way or the other, I used, in my restlessness, to wander to the gallery, for refuge from my thoughts, in the midst of the productions of Genius; and even there I found it not. The Venus, which stood so conspicuous before my eyes at those times, is now here. It is unchanged; the marble beauty knows no fading. But

the human loveliness which I then doated upon, which I doat on still, *that* has mouldered in the grave; and I would to God I were cold and senseless as that marble, or in my grave also!—But I must not pursue this train of thought.

[The following is dated a few days later.]

I DINED yesterday with one of the few families of my old acquaintance who have still an establishment at Paris. Indeed, one of the very striking changes here, is the almost total disappearance of those whom I knew not above twelve years ago. To be sure, most of them have emigrated, and a good many have been guillotined. In many other ways, also, the Revolution has tended to disperse them, so that there are really very few of the same people to be met with. Yesterday, however, I dined in company with

five or six of them ; for M. de Rivière had purposely assembled as many as he could find to meet me. Time seems to have been almost as busy with them as he has with me. The rich have become poor ; the gay, sad ; the young, prematurely old. Madame de Rivière herself, whom I recollect one of the prettiest, giddiest, and most lively women in Paris, has since undergone adventures enough to furnish forth half-a-dozen volumes of a modern novel. She was in the Conciergerie, during the reign of terror, for eight months, expecting daily to be led forth to execution, as her fellow-prisoners were on all sides of her. Her account of her imprisonment, and she is not backward in giving it, is, in truth, one of the most interesting things I ever heard. The succession of prisoners, which entered and left the prison during the time she was there, displayed to her almost every

variety of human bearing under fear, suffering, and approaching death. Some displayed a shocking levity—others a deep sense of religion—others were altogether paralyzed by the horror of their situation. At last, Madame de Rivière said, Death had become so familiar an object of contemplation, and the escaping and the suffering it seemed to be so very much a matter of chance, that, even within the walls of that terrible place, Fear, among those who had been its inhabitants some time, ceased to exist in any very strong degree. As, among military men on a campaign, the constant nearness, and yet extreme uncertainty, of death, causes the grisly King to lose all his terrors, so in this case, nearly similar causes produced nearly similar effects. Some persons wrote their memoirs—others sang—others plunged into as much licentiousness as could be compassed

within the walls of a prison. It had even, curious as it may seem, become a fashion to make bon-mots, on the way to the scaffold, with reference to the death which the punster was about to suffer. That of Danton is well-known. When he was about to be guillotined, a fellow-sufferer stepped forward to embrace him. 'Laissez,' said he, 'nos têtes doivent se rencontrer tout-à-l'heure, dans le sac'—alluding to the sack into which the heads fell, as the guillotine divided them from the body. I had thought this exaggerated; but Madame de Rivière assured me it was fully consistent with her experience.

It caused me, I confess, very considerable surprise thus to find a Parisian *petite-maîtresse* metamorphosed into a person who related historical anecdotes, from her own knowledge; and who had had a personal share in the terrible events by which her country has been

agitated for the last dozen years. But this surprise soon received considerable extension, with regard to numbers. I naturally made enquiries concerning those whom I had formerly known in the same society as the De Rivières; and a very great proportion, I found, had, in those stirring times, thrown off the slough of indolence and frivolity, and soared forth with all the activity, energy, and dignity of endurance which their positions respectively demanded. “Ah! la jolie petite Marquise de Rebours?—elle fût guillotinée deux jours avant la chute de Robespierre.”—“La belle Comtesse de Freylus?—elle fût massacrée par les Septembriseurs!”—“M. de Monjoye?—il fût déporté—et mourût à la Guiane.” Such, and such like, were the answers I received to my enquiries concerning those who had been our common companions and friends, during my

former visits to Paris. There was certainly nothing very worthy of wonder in a certain proportion of these persons having shared in the sacrifices of the Revolution ; but the extraordinary discrepancy between the persons as I remember them, and their ultimate fates, was so wide and peculiar as to strike me, I confess, very strongly with surprise. I recollect hearing a friend of mine, who had lived much in Ireland, say, in speaking of two of the very few persons of condition who, not being military men, lost their lives in the Rebellion,\* that any body who had known them as he had done, in the hospitality of their homes, and the enjoyments of their convivial intercourse, would have thought them the very last persons whose fate it would be to fall in battle. The likelihood was infinitely less, in the instance

\* The late Lord O'N——. and Mr. Luke G——.

of those of whom I have been speaking; for some of them were women—of rank, of fortune, of brilliant fashion. Who could have thought that such as these would become the inmates of prisons, and die upon the scaffold?

Madame de Rivière, in her turn, asked me concerning many of those who had emigrated to England. I told her, among other things, in what condition I found Madame de Corvillac. She would scarcely believe me. “*Quoi ! Madame de Corvillac nettoyer sa chambre ?*”—this was the circumstance which appeared to her the most extraordinary and incomprehensible. She, who had been herself a prisoner in one of the worst of prisons, overlooked the loss of rank, of fortune, of country, in the single fact, that a delicate and luxurious woman had done domestic offices with her own hand ! There was, certainly,



some contrast between the second floor in Carnaby-street, and the magnificent hotel in the Fauxbourg St. Germain; but the changes in moral points would, to any but a French-woman, have seemed the more striking and remarkable.

But, among all these changes, there is another, which, though it was not mentioned, was not, I could perceive, overlooked—the change in myself. Alas! the wear and tear of the heart produce a stronger effect upon the person, than even its own. Regret, remorse, and self-reproach, corrode the body as well as the mind. I am no longer “*le jeune Anglais vif comme un Français même* :”—I am saddened in heart, soured in temper, broken in constitution.—But I am beginning to croak; and, when I do that, I know by experience the only way is to break off at once.

## EXTRACT XXV.

“ Il faut errer dans les lieux où l'on a été aimé, dans ces lieux dont l'immobilité est là, pour attester le changement de tout le reste.”

MADAME DE STAEL.

[From the Diary.]

Spa, September, 1802.

I SHOULD wish to have avoided coming hither if I could; but a large party of my wife's relations is here, and I could not tell her she should not come. This is another of the pleasures of marrying for money, that a man of common feeling must shew some deference to the wishes of her to whom he owes every thing. If it were not for this motive, I should not be here at this moment.

Since I have been on the Continent lately, I have had many pangs and twitches from revisiting former scenes, and recalling former occurrences. But I have not yet been any where where the *locale* was likely to affect me so strongly as this. It was just at this season of the year, too, that I was here before. This adds strongly to the identity of appearance of the country round. The leaves have the same tinge, the lights which shine upon them are of the same degree of intensity. Every thing seems the same, except my heart: that is cold and dead—almost as poor Blanch herself. Poor Blanch, indeed!—for surely never was woman's lot so unhappily cast as her's. From her forced marriage, and from her marriage of love, she alike drew unhappiness. The only question is, which was the more intense? Surely the latter; for to the misery of an ill-assorted

union were added the sense of guilt, and the pangs of ill-requital. And her end, too !—I am told it took place in utter abandonment and dereliction. Oh ! man, man ! what have you to answer who thus break the heart which adores you—which has sacrificed every thing for your sake !—or rather, what have you *not* to answer ?—It will be a fearful question, one day.

This town is exactly the same as it was when the Lumleys and I used to lounge about it together. The ponies still stand, as of yore, in the little *place* before the Pouhon\*—they almost look as if they were the same ponies, so exactly similar are their general characteristics. Some of the men who let them out, certainly are the same ; for one of them recognized me, and claimed the pre-

\* The name of one of the principal pump-rooms.

ference over his companions, for old sake's sake. He averred that I had always hired my horses from him "— quand Monsieur se promenait si souvent, avec cette belle dame Anglaise, Miladi Lomlé." Of course, this not only insured him my custom, but cost me a six-franc piece, as a *pour-boire*.

I mounted a poney, which might have been the very one I had ridden by Blanch's side, could it have lived so long, and sought that well-remembered valley, which had been the scene of our explanation the day before I left Spa. As I descended the steep pitch, which leads into it, I could scarcely believe that one who had been so full of animated and beautiful life, as my companion, the last time I had been here, could, for so long a time, have passed away from among living beings, and left behind her no trace, except, perhaps, in the heart of Lady

———\*, and in a casual remembrance in my own. *Here*, it is true, on the very spot which had witnessed such a scene between us, her image rose before me with distinctness and strong pity. But, at ordinary times, one regret and one love, which ever inhabit my heart, swallow up, like Moses' rod, all others. I regard it, in some measure, as treachery to those sacred feelings, to allow any others, for ever so short a time, or in ever so slight a degree, to intrude into their place. And it is certain, however strange it may seem, that while I sat upon the very bank where I had formerly sat with Blanch, I thought less of her than of that other affection from which every tender thought, and every regretful feeling, which

\* The lady mentioned in the 'Story of Blanch Delvyn,' under the name of Margaret.—ED.

rise in my bosom, usually spring ; and to which, at all events, they invariably revert.

Nevertheless, I have, perhaps, felt more strongly since I have been at Spa, than I have ever hitherto done, the immediate opposition of my former to my present self. When I was here last, I was in the prime of my youth ; full of health, and, though I affected at the time to think otherwise, of spirits ; living in the intimate society of a delightful woman, with my feelings sufficiently interested in her to give particular zest to our intercourse, and yet not so deeply committed as to cause me painful anxiety or uneasiness. Now my health is broken, my spirits are gone. Oh ! what a difference there is between the being “ sad as night, only for wantonness ”—and that settled gloom of the heart, which springs from real afflic-

tion and irreparable misfortune. This is the difference, as regards myself; and for my companion, I have a heartless, cold-mannered, uninformed woman of fashion, to whom I have sold myself 'for a mess of pottage.' The best of our *ménage*, is that we live much apart; for I can barely conceal my contempt and dislike for her; and it is cruel and wrong to shew it. There never were two people who lived together, between whom there was less intimate communion. If Plato's doctrine of 'half-spirits' be true, we undoubtedly are two halves who never were meant to be united into one whole. Her relations, too, must think me a proud, reserved, self-concentrated man; for I have done little else but wander alone among the woods and hills since I have been here; instead of joining their miscalled parties of pleasure to Coo, Mon Jardin, and the other



Lions in the environs. Indeed, I believe they would have some justice in their judgment; for my health has been worse, and my temper more soured, during the last few weeks, than they ever were before; and I certainly have been any thing but gracious to them.

My wife wants to go on to Italy; but *I will not* do that. It would tear my heart to pieces. Go to Italy with *her*? O, never! I do not yet tell her so in direct terms; but I will take especial care that the journey never takes place. To Switzerland, à la bonne heure; but not one foot beyond the Alps. It has been bad enough to encounter the local reminiscences here;—what, then, would it be to expose myself to those in Italy? If she likes to go into Germany, or to Switzerland, or to the South of France, I will take her, with all my heart;—but Italy?

Italy?—the very word has the power of a spell over my inmost soul, and lashes up its sufferings to frenzy. No!—on that land shall my foot never be set again.

## EXTRACT XXVI.

—— dum bibimus, dum certa, unguenta, puellas.  
Pocimus, obrepat non intellecta senectus.

JUVENAL, Sat. IX.\*

[From the Diary.]

Montpellier, January, 1803.

I COULD wish to pass the remainder of the winter here; for I feel the mild air of the South of France of advantage to me. But wars, and rumours of wars, make it necessary for us to bend our steps homewards.

\* These fine lines are thus rendered by Mr. Gifford:—

Lo! while we give the unregarded hour  
To wine and revelry in pleasure's bower,  
The noiseless foot of Time steals swiftly by,  
And, ere we dream of manhood, age is nigh. ED.

I should not at all like to be in France, in the event of a war breaking out ; and, I must say, I consider that event not at all unlikely to occur very shortly.

It is sad to be obliged to (what is called) “ take care of oneself.”—Till within these two or three years, I have always had the most robust health, and I have consequently borne its decline with great impatience and ill-grace. What I like least of all is, the gradual progress which my illness, or rather my want of health, has made. I feel as if my strength were wasting away by regular degrees ; and think, sometimes, that I shall not live long. And yet, I am very loth to die. I cling to life, for I am not fit for death. ‘ To die ? ’—‘ death ? ’—Is it then already come to this ? Am I really beginning to prepare for the great transition, as for an event not far distant ? What has become of

my life? How have I allowed it to slip through my hands, unheeded, unimproved? Yes, my youth has been wasted in empty pleasures; and sickness and premature age now overtake me, unprepared for their coming, impatient of their presence, fearful of their effects. My life has not been such as to make me descend the hill cheerfully, looking onward with hope and humble confidence for repose and reward at its base. *I* look back with bitter regret towards the summit, and am urged painfully on, my reluctant steps endeavouring to struggle against the force of Time. Oh! how I have squandered those gifts and advantages which Nature conferred on me!—how I have wasted that best of all her gifts, time! The retrospect of a life like mine is indeed bitter, when viewed from the boundaries of age, from the vicinity of the grave. I wonder

at my infatuation—I despise my folly—I shudder at my guilt. Yes, guilt—for that which, at the time, I considered as a venial error, or as a successful piece of gallantry, whereof to be vain, now appears to me in its true colours. The trappings of the world are stripped from it; and it appears in the real deformity of its nature. Many things, even, which had faded entirely from my memory, now revive again, and speak to my soul in accusation.

Neither have I those consolations and appliances which usually soften the decline of life :—

“ ——— all that should accompany old age,  
I must not look to have ——— ”

Married I am, it is true, but I know none of the amenities and charities of domestic life. I feel the ties of marriage, only by their gall-

ing. I have no ideas in common with my wife; our feelings, our wishes, our habits of thought, are totally dissimilar. How, then, can we assist each other in bearing the ills which fall to the lot of humanity? How can natures so unlike soothe and comfort each other?

On looking over what I have said, I find I have been writing in the tone of a sexagenarian, at the least. Who would imagine that they were the thoughts and feelings of a man under forty? But old age is not regulated merely by years. The "way of life" may fall "into the sear, the yellow leaf"—long before winter, or even advanced autumn, in reality, arrives. The smooth sword does not fret the sheath; it is that which is jagged, and irregular, and unsteady, which wears it prematurely out. And it is in this sense that this proverb has been appli-

cable to me. The heart within has, indeed, worn out the body which sheathes it; both are hastening to their ultimate decay.

Yes! I feel the germ of death within me; I feel that my days are numbered. I think much and deeply on the subjects to which this conviction gives rise; but the past still ever starts up in accusation against me, and drives the future from my thoughts. She, for whom my love was greater than all the affections of my life put together,—she went down to her grave with all the consolations which arise from unvarying rectitude of conduct, and the habit of religious thought. It is true that she was snatched away in the fulness of youth, and on the eve of the crowning of an attachment of years, after an obstacle, apparently insurmountable, had been, for years, opposed to it. Her death, also, was of a violent and appalling nature;



but still she was virtuous, and she was religious; and *this* assuredly is sufficient to render the flitting of the spirit calmer, even amidst all the horrors of shipwreck, than that of the unrighteous can be with every aid and preparation.

For me, my past life presents a long record of accusing deeds, of the real blackness of which I never have been fully conscious till now. And for religion—what has such a wretch as I to do with religion? Prayers? they would come polluted from my lips! Penitence? Alas! *my* penitence is heart-wringing and tumultuous remorse. That deep, calm, and holy feeling which repentance, in its true sense, brings to the heart, I can never know. That humble, and yet assured, hope with which religion rewards its votaries, is beyond my sinful reach. My reason will not let me find refuge in the wild

and impious fantasies of fanatical enthusiasts. It is too stern to let me think that offences like mine can be wiped away at once by a simple 'Credo.' And the aspirations of the really pious followers of a purer faith, these, alas ! are denied to a soul which yet needs so much purification as mine.

Yes ! it still clings tenaciously to the world :—it still shrinks from launching itself into that vast ocean of Eternity, of which the shores are so unknown. To which of its shores, indeed, should I be wafted ? That is a question from the contemplation of which I recoil ; I need further preparation before I dare consider it !

My marriage has not been blessed with children : if I had had a son, I should have left him the legacy of a record of my life. I would have composed it partly from the con-

temporary traces of it which I have preserved, partly from my recollections of the facts, in the light in which they appear to me now. On the day he entered the University, it should have been placed in his hands. If he had had the misfortune to have in his disposition the seeds of that bent which has worked the misery of his father's life, I know nothing so likely to check him, even at that period of youth, as the view of the fruits of those seeds in that father himself. But my marriage-bed has been barren: I have not been thought worthy of being blessed with children to surround and comfort me in the decline of life.

Oh! if that life were to be led again, how widely different it would be!—But this is the common-place and vain regret of every man who has misspent his time when he had

it, and then futilely repines at its loss. I *have* lived a useless and an evil life; and now I reap my reward. As my strength decays, my gloomy feelings increase. I feel doubly the folly and the vanity of all the motives which misled me. Where is the high blood, now, which I used to plead to myself as an excuse? Where is the impetuosity of youthful feelings which, reciprocally gave to it, and received from it, aid? They are faded and gone:—they are faded and gone even before their time, by the lassitude following over-exertion, by the re-action succeeding over-excitement. Excitement?—To what a train of folly, vice, and guilt has not that one word led! ‘The want of excitement’ is the unmeaning plea with which we strive to deceive ourselves, by so miscalling the impulses of our own evil passions. This jargon of ‘excitement’ has done more harm

than almost the paradoxical sentimentalities of Rousseau, or the fantastic and maudlin enthusiasm of the modern Germans. The 'want of excitement' is a phrase ready pruned and rounded, wherewith to answer (ill-enough, but still to answer) the reproaches of our disgusted conscience. We all know the force of a trim and compact expression, when we wish to shut our eyes upon the reason of a case. The battle is half-gained when we have invented some such as a preliminary answer to the objections of all comers. None ever was more generally adopted than this, and none from worse causes, or to worse ends. When I was degrading myself by low dissipation, and wasting my energies of body and mind in its pursuit, truly it was for the sake of excitement. When I was ruining myself at the gaming-table, this was excitement also!—

How can we be so simple, and so silly, as to be thus deceived by tricks of our own inventing?—Yet, who can deny that they are so every day?

## EXTRACT XXVII.

“ Last stage of all.”

AS YOU LIKE IT.

London, February, 1804.

MY DEAR FREWIN,—

MY physicians have, at last, condescended to tell me the truth, and to announce to me a fact of which I have myself been aware for many months—namely, that my end is drawing near. I wish to see my old, and tried, and excellent friend before I die. I know that he will come to me at once. Dear Charles, we have known each other now upwards of twenty years; and, during all that time, all the advantages of friendship have been on my side. How often have you restrained my impetuosity, and preserved me

from its consequences ! how often have you assisted me in the hour of distress, and consoled me in that of sorrow ! For me, I have seldom, if at all, been able to return these services—for your life has been that of a wise and virtuous man. Would to God that mine had been so too !—Would to God that I had profited by your many warnings—that I had been guided by your excellent advice ! Oh, Frewin ! at a moment like this, when Death appears before us, imminent, inevitable, how poor, how paltry, how weak, do the motives which have led us into evil seem ? You, who are so blessed in your family ; who have so little of a painful nature to look back to ; you can scarcely conceive how bitter my thoughts have been since I have foreseen, and I have foreseen it long, that I was doomed to die an early death. I have, I trust, brought myself at last into a frame



of mind more suited to the great change I am about to undergo; but still, at times, the retrospect of the past raises up within me tumultuous and conflicting thoughts—passionate and agonizing remorse.

I have many things to say to you, dear Frewin, before I die, which I am too weak to write, and which, at all events, I would rather say in person. You know you are executor to my will—though, indeed, there is little to execute. I have thought it right to leave all I have to my wife. We were never suited to each other, but I have no other blame to impute to her; and I doubt not that for the little happiness in which we have lived together, I may have been to the full as much in fault as she has.

But I am exhausted with writing even this short letter. I will keep the rest of what I have to say till we meet. It is sad

to think that this is the last time I shall ever address you!—you have been to me the best of friends, and my heart expands towards you with gratitude, with its last pulsations. God bless you, my dear friend!

---

[Letter from Mr. Frewin to Lady Katharine Frewin.]

London, February 1804. .

MY DEAREST KATHARINE,—

IT is all over. My poor friend breathed his last, at a little after nine o'clock, last night. It is, indeed, a consolation to me that I have been able to be with him during the last days of his life, for I feel that my presence soothed and supported him during that awful period. To any one, indeed, the approach of death must be a period of awe;

but Blount, you know, had many causes of painful feeling, which would tend to increase that sensation in him. And they did so to a great degree. He exclaimed repeatedly, "What a fool have I been !" He lamented, now, the waste of those powers and advantages with which he was so eminently gifted, and of which he never could be persuaded to make a corresponding use. He spoke of Antonia, and by her name; the first time I have heard him pronounce it since he looked upon her as she lay a corpse. But she seems to have had constant and strong hold upon his heart; for, during a perturbed sleep, when I was sitting by his side, he called upon her name, in varied tones of fond affection, of sorrow, and of despair. I was glad that Mrs. Blount was not present; but I kept her as much out of the room as possible; and the task was the less difficult,

for, though she evidently wished to do every thing which was proper and decent, there was none of that overflowing and devoted affection which it is so difficult, nay so impossible, to controul upon such occasions. Blount has behaved very rightly and handsomely with respect to her. Feeling that he had derived all the fortune of his later life from her, he has left her the whole of his personalty, every thing, indeed, which he had to leave, with the exception of a few tokens of remembrance to friends. Doddridge, you know, goes to his cousin. He has left to you the drawing of the house at Lucerno,\* “in testimony of his grateful remembrance of your intended kindness towards her whose habitation it was.” You can scarcely imagine, dear Kate, how vividly this remained in his memory.

\* That mentioned, p. 131.—ED.

I must remain here yet some days, to make the arrangements necessary at such a moment; but I long to get back to you, after the painful time I have been passing. It is, indeed, a trying and afflicting thing to witness the death of the oldest friend we have in the world; of one with whom we have been in habits of constant intercourse for so many years, that it almost seems a necessary part of our existence. What I have witnessed here, has, I will own, shaken me considerably. Poor Blount had many faults, it is true, but he had also many noble and excellent qualities, strong powers of mind, and the warmest feelings of friendship. He had of late years become depressed and soured, partly from the loss of the woman he loved; and partly from having married one whom he did not love. He had, also, I believe, feelings of self-accusa-

tion constantly gnawing at his heart ; which were little guessed by the world, but which, like the hair-shirt of a Catholic penitent, secretly preyed upon and galled him. You know sufficient of the story of Antonia, to guess whence these might arise ; and there were others similar in nature, though less in degree. Poor, poor fellow ! my tears spring to my eyes, as I reflect that he, who was so animated, so full of fire and of life, lies a cold corpse, in the next room ! Well, at the least, I held his dear old friendly hand, as he breathed his last—and closed his eyes when he was no more. “ God bless you, Frewin ! ” were the last words he spoke, with the exception of that which fluttered in his last sigh, and *that* was—  
“ Antonia ! ”

## POSTSCRIPT BY THE EDITOR.

BEFORE the reader lays down the book, I wish to say a few words concerning the principle by which I have been guided in my selections from Mr. Blount's papers. I was, at one time, tempted, for the sake of increased effect, to put into immediate succession and opposition to each other, such parts of the Manuscripts as might relate to the same person, at whatever distance of time they might respectively have been written. But I afterwards preferred, as being both a more natural and a more clear arrangement, to leave such parts as I did select in their regular order of date, that the progression of the writer's mind and feelings

might be presented, as unconsciously depicted by himself.

If the reader have viewed this progression in the same light that it has appeared to me, a not unprofitable lesson, may, I think, be drawn from it. Mr. Blount, I take originally to have been a man of warm and upright feelings, as well as of considerable ardour of disposition. But he caused his own misery, and that of her who loved and trusted him, by that most pernicious and enervating bent of mind with regard to women, for which, thank Heaven! our language wants an expression; I mean, that common to men whom our neighbours term *à bonnes fortunes*. The increasing action of this corroding influence is, I think, very apparent in the gradual change of tone, throughout the course of these papers. He begins by talking of these matters with gaiety and



buoyant animal spirits. He resolutely shuts his eyes against every thing which he feels it disagreeable to look upon ; he seeks only present enjoyment, and he finds it. After further self-indulgence, we find him more difficult to be excited, and occasionally looking back with tenderness and regret to the happiness which he has thrown away. Neither does he any longer possess that flow of spirits, which is the surest shield against suffering from the agitations of the stronger passions. Ultimately his heart becomes corrupt, and his life loose, even to licentiousness. He plunges into dissipation to shake off the thorns which the flowers of indulgence have left within his heart ; and he only doubles their number. He becomes soured in temper, and discontented in his habits of thought. The present has for him no joys, the future no hopes ; the past he dares not look at. At length,

from fortuitous circumstances, a second dawn breaks and brightens upon him ; a happiness, he has not deserved, is placed almost within his reach, when a circumstance, equally fortuitous, snatches it from him for ever !

What store of mental comfort and consolation has he then to turn to ? What feelings has he hived up to support him in sorrow or adversity ? Alas ! none ; his life becomes one dreary gloom ; there is no bright spot to alleviate or adorn it.

Such a man as this cannot bear solitude ; he rushes again into the world, and seeks means of driving away reflection more desperate even than those he formerly employed. These ruin his fortune, as those had corrupted his heart ; and he sells himself in a mercenary marriage, which completes the climax of his misfortunes caused by faults. And what is the result ? He drags

on two or three miserable years, and sinks into an early grave, alike morally and physically worn out. He dies of old age at nine-and-thirty.

Such is the outline, as it has appeared to me, of the life of a man of the description I have named. Is the picture one, which we should wish to be a likeness of ourselves? I think there cannot be two opinions on the subject.

Reader, if the bent of your disposition be inclining you to the course of which you have just seen the consequence, pause a moment on your way, and ask yourself this question:—"How shall I think on these subjects by the time I am forty?"

THE END.

LONDON :  
PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET STREET.







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